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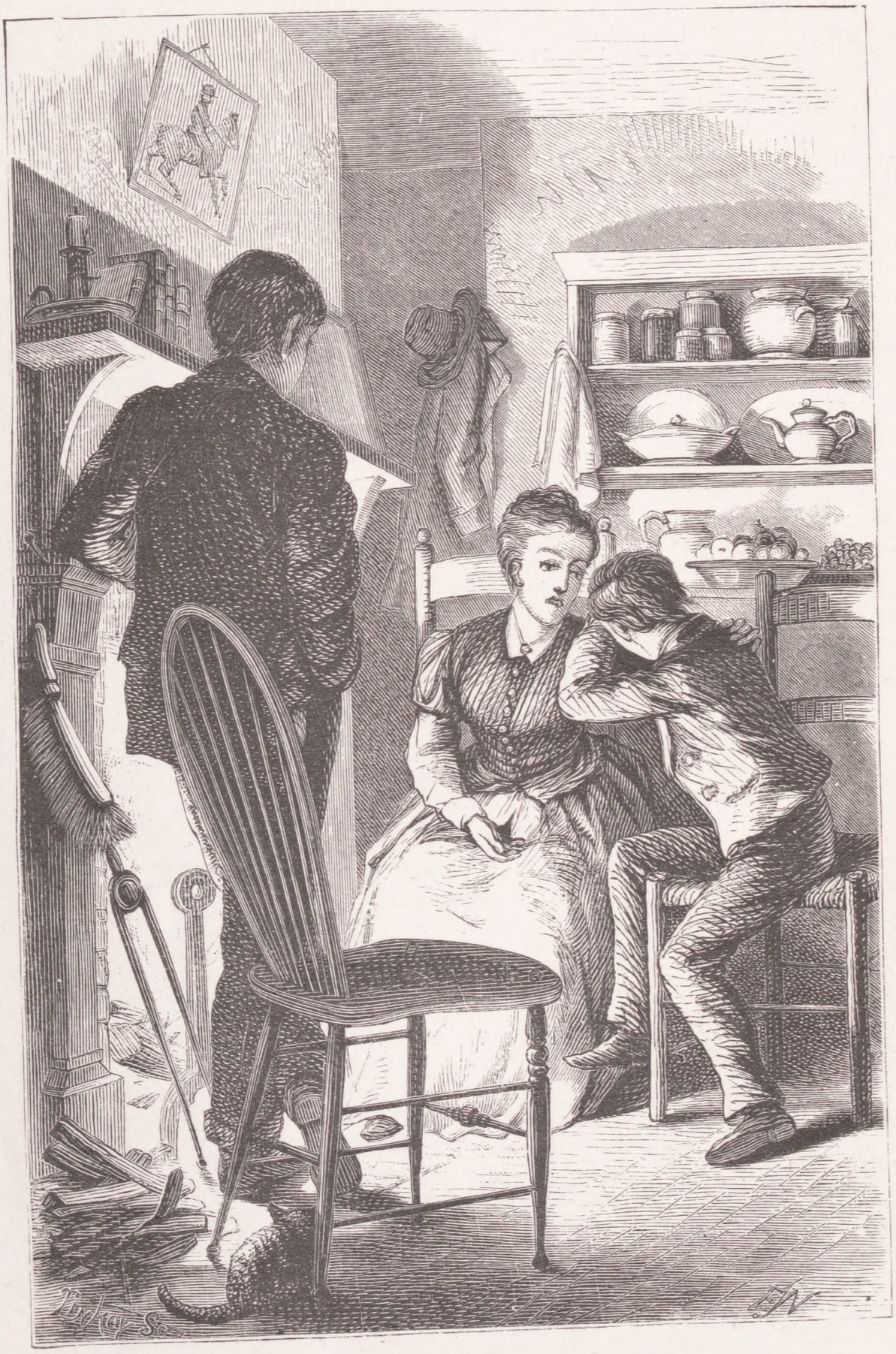

THE SAD STORY TOLD. Page 92.

WEALTH AND WINE.

BY

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WEALTH AND WINE.

CHAPTER I.

ONE DAY.

FOR once the rueful month of March was ushered in with a warmth and glow of sunshine which might have done honor to smiling, flowery May. Chickadees proclaimed merrily their own winsome name, as they gleaned in the stubble-fields, or despoiled wayside grasses of their long-guarded treasures. On southern hill-slopes the snow had entirely disappeared, while brooks babbled noisy welcomes to the tiny rivulets which hastened to join them on their way to the great river.

"A glad, happy morning," said Mabel Pease, as she looked up to the bright, blue sky, and around upon the fair landscape. "Everybody should be happy this morning."

"Are you always happy?" asked an old man who leaned heavily upon his cane, as he regarded his companion with affectionate interest.

"Not always," she replied a little sadly. "But on such a morning as this, God smiles so lovingly upon us, it seems to me that we ought to rejoice and give thanks."

"You think God's smile is in the sunshine?"

"I do think so."

"So it is, child, and in the storm as well. It's not always that God is nearest to us in unclouded days. Young as you are, you have learned that by experience; and I have been learning it for threescore years and ten."

This conversation was interrupted by a ringing voice exclaiming, "All aboard for South Orchard! Mabel, John, Jerry, and Nell, hurry up! Mrs. Bent has made a hundred pounds of sugar, and sold it at an extra price."

"Do you believe that?" asked Mabel, hastening to obey the unceremonious summons.

"I know it," was the reply. "I have been over there this morning. Started before the

sun was fairly up, and Mrs. Bent told me herself. She has the earliest sugar-lot in town, though South Orchard isn't much behind it. Rubber boots, every one of you, or you can't go with me."

"How you do order folks round!" said a young girl, sweeping back from her forehead a mass of wavy hair, over which she tied a jaunty cap of squirrel-skin. "Mr. Raleigh Bedlow, are you the colonel of this regiment?"

"To be sure I am, Jenny, Jerry, or whatever is your name."

The speaker was gone, and half-way down a steep descent on the north side of the house, before any one could make answer to this. He had seen what others had not seen—a signal of distress, a white streamer floating in the breeze; and he knew that somewhere, not far away, he would be likely to find a boy who needed help.

"What is it, John?" he asked, as soon as he saw the boy.

"Nothing new," was the reply. "But I want you to invite my mother to spend the day at your house. Father came home late last night, and when he wakes I shall have

all I can do to manage him. I have emptied his jug, just as I told him I would, whenever I could find it, and he will be terribly angry. Don't let grandfather know. He has had trouble enough already."

"So he has, and so have you too. Better come to South Orchard and spend the day. We mean to have a jolly time. Mother has been cooking for us all the morning; to say nothing of the potatoes we shall roast in the ashes. Come with us, and let your father take care of himself. You said yesterday you wouldn't bear much more from him."

"I know I did, and I've not changed my mind. But I can't go with you. This may be my last day with my father, and I must go through with it. I wish you were not going so far away."

"What do you mean, John?"

"I mean that I may need you. When father is mad with passion or liquor, he is very strong. But I can manage some way if mother is beyond his reach. He will sleep for several hours yet."

"I wish I *could* stay at home," now said Raleigh musingly. "But it is going to be a grand sap day, and we must make what

sugar we can. I told grandfather, the first of January, that I calculated the old farm would earn something this year. I'll come round for your mother, and then we'll see."

Mrs. Bedlow was summoned to a private consultation with her son, and before a half-hour had passed, she welcomed a pale-faced woman, whom she addressed as "Sister Jane."

"I am glad to have you with us to-day," she said cordially. "I don't expect to see the children again until night. Raleigh is very ambitious to make all the money he can this year. Father says he has taken a new start. I think John has had something to do with rousing him."

"I shouldn't suppose Raleigh needed rousing. He seems to be always on the alert. I am thankful father has such a boy to depend upon in his old age."

"And I am thankful my boy has such a man to advise and help him. They are always happy together too; and now Mabel has come, our home is more cheerful than it has been any time since Oliver died."

"I am glad Mabel is here," was all Jane Warland cared to say. Her thoughts were

busy with other scenes than those upon which her eyes rested, and she heard other voices than those of father and sister. She had been unwilling to leave her home that morning; and now that she was away, she found it impossible to rid herself of a feeling of anxious suspense.

Unknown to her, another shared this anxiety. Raleigh Bedlow was not so careless and light-hearted as he seemed, singing at his work, and suggesting new fields of exploration to his companions. When opportunity offered, he said to Mabel Pease abruptly, "You know about Aunt Jane?"

"I know something about her," replied the young lady. "I had heard of her before I came here."

"Well, her husband came home drunk after midnight last night, and John expects a row with him when he wakes up, and I ought to be there to help take care of him. Some folks would smooth over that story; but I won't smooth over anything for Hastings Warland. If there is anybody in the world I hate, it is that man. Everybody else has some redeeming quality."

"You are very severe, Raleigh."

"I know I am, and I have reason to be. His own family have cast him off entirely. He was rich once; but now he is so poor he wouldn't have a place to lay his head, if grandfather didn't provide it. My mother remembers the time when he thought it a great condescension on his part to speak to his wife's relatives. If I had my way, he would leave this part of the country before sunset. My heart and my conscience are both hardened against him. If the time ever comes when I have any pity for that man, I shall be good enough to be translated. So much by way of introduction," added the speaker in a tone somewhat less severe. "There's a hill just beyond the woods, where I can look down on Aunt Jane's little house; and John told me if I'd go there at noon, he'd let me know whether he wanted me or not. If he does, I shall hurry on as fast as I can. If he don't, I shall be back before the girls will have time to miss me. The potatoes are roasted, and Jennie knows how to keep everything right in the sugar camp. I wanted to tell you, so if I am gone long, you will know where I am."

From the summit of the hill, one glance

northward revealed to Raleigh Bedlow the fact that his cousin desired his presence; and without a moment's delay he hastened forward, regarding neither the banks of snow nor pools of water which lay in his path. The time seemed long, yet it was in reality short; although quite sufficient to intensify his hatred for Hastings Warland.

"Out of the house, you miscreant! Out of the house! Curse the day I ever saw one of your name!"

To this greeting the intruder replied coolly, "That last remark of yours is the most sensible I ever heard you make. But where is John? Tell me that."

"Here I am," called a half-stifled voice. "Come quick, Raleigh."

Another moment, and the father was hurled from his position against a heavy door leading to the cellar; and his assailant was groping in darkness.

"Where are you, John?"

"Here, in the old well. Open the south door, and then you can see. And do be quick. My right arm is broken, and I can't move."

It was well that Raleigh was a strong, stal-

wart boy—fit representative of a race distinguished for strength and size. Without question, he obeyed his cousin, who had fallen so helplessly through the trap over the old well that he had no power to extricate himself. The water was not deep, but it had chilled him until he was nearly paralyzed; so that when he was carried into the open air he seemed more dead than alive.

"Now, I must get you home; there's no question about that. But I don't see how I'm to do it, unless I carry you. I wouldn't leave you here with your father, any sooner than I'd leave you with a hungry lion. It looks as though he'd tried to kill you."

"He threatened to kill me; but don't, don't talk about it. I can't bear it. I've tried to do my duty."

"I know it, John; and you've done it too. I ought to hold my tongue, but I can't. I'm not as good as you are. I shall have to carry you home. You can't stay here."

"No, but somebody may come this way. I believe my ankle is sprained. If it wasn't for that, I might walk. Father never was so bad before. I'm glad mother wasn't here. Poor mother!"

"Halloa there, boys! What's the matter?"

"Matter enough," Raleigh Bedlow replied to this welcome salutation. "We want some help."

It did not require a long explanation to make the matter plain to the kind-hearted neighbor who had arrived so opportunely.

"A bad piece of business, but it might be worse," he said with affected lightness. "Hold on ten minutes, and I'll be round with some kind of a team. You need warming up the first thing. Here's my frock, and Raleigh can spare his."

"Of course I can," was the quick response; and presently John was made as comfortable as circumstances would allow.

True to his word, the neighbor returned within the specified time. Mr. Warland, too, having recovered somewhat from the shock received at the hands of his nephew, appeared upon the scene, and angrily demanded what was going on.

"I shall be back this way before long, and if you don't find out before that time, I'll tell you all I know about it," responded Mr. Bradford.

"I've nothing to do with you. Leave my premises at once. John, come into the house. I command you to come, and I'm in no mood to be disobeyed."

"Hold on there, Warland. John couldn't come into the house if he wanted to, and he wouldn't if he could. You'd better mind your own business. If you don't, you'll get a steady home, where they'll let you work for your board the year round. Don't say a word, Raleigh. I've said enough for once. Wait till John's taken care of. You hurry along the shortest way, and tell your folks they're going to have company. Then start for the doctor, and don't let the snow melt under Roan's feet on the way."

Beyond a quivering of the lips, Mrs. Warland manifested no emotion when told that her son had been severely injured by his father.

"Mr. Bradford is bringing him here," was added in the same breath. "Tell mother I am going for the doctor."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Bedlow. "What is it? John hurt?"

"Yes, sir." It was not necessary to make further explanation.

"I've been expecting something worse than that," said old Dr. Saunders, when Raleigh had delivered his message. "If the boy an't killed, there's reason to be thankful. I don't generally interfere with other folks' business, unless I'm called on, but I'll give that man a plain talk before I come back. I knew yesterday he was getting ugly, and it was well for his wife that she was beyond his reach."

Dr. Saunders did not often stop to talk when he had business on hand; and now, talking did not delay his preparations for the work before him. He followed fast after the messenger who had summoned him, and was welcomed both as friend and physician.

John Warland was in the very room his mother had occupied when, as Jane Bedlow, she was called "the handsomest girl within twenty miles." Everything remained as she had left it, while on the bed lay her son, half unconscious of his surroundings.

The present was less to him than the immediate past. He recalled every word spoken by his father that day. He felt the pain of every blow he had received in his struggle for life. He opened his eyes wearily when Dr. Saunders addressed him; then closed

them, as if he would thus shut out some dreaded sight.

The fracture of his arm was easily reduced. Time and judicious treatment would restore his ankle; but the general condition of his system was not easily determined. It was evident that he had exerted himself to the utmost.

"My boy must not die!" exclaimed Mrs. Warland, as she followed Dr. Saunders from the room.

"Do you love your boy?" he asked in reply.

"Love him? Better than I love myself; better than the whole world besides. You don't know how a mother loves. Love him? My life is bound up in his."

"Do you love him better than you love his father?"

"You have no right to ask me that question. I have said enough."

"Yes, my child, you have; and God knows I pity you. But your boy's father would have killed him. Did you know that?"

"It can't be so bad as that," she answered despairingly.

"Jane, may I talk with you as I would talk with my own daughter?"

"Yes, doctor." And with an effort Jane Warland raised her eyes to the face of her friend. The other members of the family were with John, and she led the way to the sitting-room.

"I must begin by asking you a question. It may seem to you a strange one, but there is no time to waste. If you must choose between your husband and your son, which would you choose? This is John's last trial of strength with his father."

"Don't let my boy die, doctor. I can bear anything, if he is spared to me. Through all these years I have been silent. God forgive me, if I do wrong! *Now* I must speak. To-morrow my lips may be sealed. It must be that I am unlike other women whose love never changes. They can love on through all cruelty and unkindness. I have prayed for strength to do my whole duty. Are you answered, Dr. Saunders?"

"Yes, Jane." And as the good man thus replied, he scanned her face closely. "You will not blame me for interference, if Hastings Warland leaves you to those who will

care for you. Your father is coming down the stairs, and I must see him for a short time.''

Was it a dream? Had she been dreaming all these years, since she told George Saunders she could never love him; that her heart had been given to another?

His father was older than then; but the tones of his voice and the light in his clear, blue eyes were the very same. If only she could wake to find herself a happy, joyous girl!

In the flush of his manhood's pride, Hastings Warland had wooed her to a home of wealth and elegance; charmed her by his devotion; and dazzled her by fancy sketches of their future happiness. She gave her love without stint or measure, while he loved her as the selfish love. She was beautiful. She would adorn his home; and if sometimes he caught glimpses of a spirit which might be roused to resistance, he thought of it as but adding zest to the life he anticipated.

The woman had *not* been dreaming. Fearful realities confronted her. The unloved, unloving wife of a demon's slave; not those

who knew her best could fathom the depths of her wretchedness.

"Mother," murmured her boy, as she laid her hand upon his head.

"Yes, dear," she answered softly.

"You are safe, mother. Don't feel bad about me. I'm tired, but I shall get rested now. Grandfather said we might stay here always. I asked him. So you won't go away. Promise me you won't leave me, mother."

"No, John, we will stay here together, you and I. Now close your eyes and rest."

"I am so glad. I've done all I could for father."

As this was said, Raleigh Bedlow left the room, and was rushing from the house, when his grandfather called to him.

"Yes, sir," he responded.

"Where now?"

"I am going down the hill."

"Don't go, my boy. It is no place for you now," said the grandfather. "Dr. Saunders is going there to speak with authority. There won't anything be gained by hard words."

"Yes, sir," was the reluctant reply.

"But I want to tell that man that he's no better than a murderer. I hate him; and if John don't hate him, he ought to."

It was no time to reason with the high-spirited boy; no time to talk of forbearance and forgiveness. Mr. Bedlow knew that his wishes would be regarded, and for the present this was sufficient.

Hastings Warland was standing just within the door of the cottage he had called home, when Dr. Saunders drove his horse to the very threshold. The old physician could be stern when occasion demanded; and now, if ever, there seemed occasion for sternness. Yet something like pity stirred his heart as he looked at the man before him, noting the changes dissipation had wrought in a once handsome face and noble figure.

Blear-eyed and trembling, gazing at the visitor in a strange, wild way, this man muttered, "What do you want here?"

"I want to talk with you," answered the doctor. "I've just been called to see a boy who came near being killed to-day. His father tried to kill him. If the boy should die, there will be a legal investigation of the matter, and it is necessary to get the facts of

the case. Do you know anything about it?"

"Who is the boy?" was asked stammeringly.

"John Hastings Warland; and if he dies, you will be his murderer."

The wretched man's face grew livid. He extended his arms imploringly, and fell to the floor as one smitten with sudden death. For one moment Dr. Saunders hoped that the end had come; then, mindful of his duty, sought to restore the sufferer. He was successful, but it was long ere the tightly closed lips opened.

"Will John die?"

"I don't know; I hope not, for his mother's sake. She has suffered enough in being your wife. But that is all in the past, and, if John lives, they can be happy together. He loves his mother. If he dies, she will be very lonely, but she will be taken care of."

"She's my wife, and she'll go where I do," said Mr. Warland, forgetting all fear in his anger that any one presumed to speak of her future life.

"You may go to the State's prison," re-

plied his companion, every feeling of pity destroyed by his heartlessness.

"I don't believe John is much hurt," now responded the unnatural father, with an effort to speak boldly. "I know the Bedlows. They are a low set, and can tell a story to suit themselves."

"Stop that!" thundered the doctor. "Another such word, and I'll have you arrested within half an hour. You are to leave town before to-morrow morning, and you are to go alone. Don't interrupt me. You have only to listen and obey. It will be for your interest to submit without opposition. If you leave quietly, your fare will be paid to any place you may designate. If not, you will be arrested for an attempt to murder your son. Perhaps you remember that you threatened to kill him. A strong case can be made against you."

"Who'll pay my fare?" asked Hastings Warland in a tone of abject terror.

"That is no concern of yours," was the stern reply. "It will be done to get you out of the way, and save an honorable family from the disgrace of having you arrested."

He had never anticipated such an hour as this; never dreamed that the time could come when he would be obliged to go forth alone to battle with life. In all the wide world, there was not a home whose doors were open to him; not one face which would brighten at his approach. Go where he would, there was not one to welcome him. His wife and child had been his servants, to do his bidding, and minister to his gratification. He had demanded from them all things. He had given nothing.

"I have a right to see my wife," he said at length.

"Right? You have no rights," replied Dr. Saunders. "You have no claim upon your wife or child. You have hardly a claim to be considered a human being. I have told you what you must do. Will you go from here, or shall I call upon an officer of the law to arrest you?"

"I will go," was replied with some hesitation.

"And remember you are never to return. Mr. Bedlow's family will have nothing more to do with you. John says he has done all he can for you. You'll never drag him

down to your level; there's too much of his mother about him for that. If I was in his place, I should want to open my veins, and let out every drop of your blood there is in them."

The father writhed in agony as this was said, yet ventured no remonstrance. He was forced to hear still more.

"Hastings Warland, have you any conscience? Have you any thought of your accountability to God? Have you any pride? Have you any regard for anything in heaven or on earth? Have you any fear of punishment in this world or another? Do you remember what you *were*, and do you know what you *are?* You were a handsome young man. You were well educated, and the possessor of what many people would call an independent fortune. You claimed to be a gentleman. What are you now? You are a miserable, degraded, drunken pauper. That is *what* you are, and *all* you are; and may God have mercy on your soul!"

CHAPTER II.

ONE CONVERSION.

"WELL, Raleigh Bedlow, so here you are at last. Now, just give an account of yourself. Cousin Mabel, Nell, and I have been working hard; and never sight nor sound of you for two or three hours. You are to be tried as a deserter, and punished accordingly. Why, Raleigh, what is the matter? Are you sick?" asked Jenny, interrupting her speech.

"No, I'm not sick," was his reply. "Since I left you, I have been home, and worked harder than you have."

"What have you been doing?"

"Several things. First, I dragged John out of the old well, and carried him out-doors. Then I helped Mr. Bradford get him on the spring-board, and then I went for the doctor."

A confusion of questions followed, which

were so fully answered that the little group understood what had transpired. Jenny, whose feelings were easily moved, and who had not yet learned to control their expression, sobbed bitterly, even while she denounced in severest terms the man who could do such dreadful things.

"I just wish he was dead and out of the way, so we never should have to see him again in all the world. That's just what I wish!" she exclaimed. "Then Aunt Jane and Cousin John could live with us, and we could all be happy."

"Don't wish any one dead," said Mabel Pease. "It is not right to do that."

"I don't suppose it is. But what else can you do with such an awful man? He's a curse to the world. It an't wrong to say that," added Jenny triumphantly. "I heard our minister say that drunkards are a curse to the world, and he knows."

"Everybody knows that," responded her brother. "Drunkenness is the curse of the world, and moderate drinkers are responsible for it. That's my belief; and if I ever put the wine-cup to my lips, I hope my hand will be palsied, before a drop of the cursed stuff passes my lips."

"Cousin Raleigh, unsay that!" cried Mabel, springing to his side, and laying her hand upon his arm.

"Unsay it? Never! The demon is in the wine. Ask Aunt Jane. She knows. She will tell you. If you had heard her talk, as she talked to John and me last winter, you would never ask me to unsay my words. Better, a thousand times, that my hand should be palsied than that I should drink wine."

"You never *will* drink it, will you?" sobbed Nellie.

"Never," he replied, folding his arms about her. "I promised father, before he died, that I would be a teetotaler to the end of my life, and I will. There's the only safety, let people say what they will."

The bubbling syrup needed attention; and the sap which had flowed freely since morning must be gathered. Work could not be neglected. The discussion was abruptly closed, yet no one could forget the occasion. Those who watched by the bedside of John Warland could hardly be more anxious than were his cousins at South Orchard.

Raleigh was to spend the night in the

sugar-camp, and Jenny, whom he usually addressed as Jerry, begged the privilege of remaining with him. "She could sleep on the hemlock boughs. They would make a great deal better bed than a good many poor children had," she said, as she urged her suit. "Mother will be willing, if you say yes. I want to have it to remember, when I grow up."

As usual, the child carried her point; remaining alone, while her brother drove through the woods, and saw Mabel and Nellie safely on the well-travelled road. Returning to the camp, he was welcomed joyously.

"What should I do without you!" she exclaimed, running to meet him. "What should we do, if you were bad and wicked? Mother says you are a real blessing to us all, and grandfather says so too. Is Cousin John just as good as you be?"

"A great deal better," answered Raleigh.

"I don't believe that," was Jenny's quick response; but her brother knew that in his cousin's heart there was a deeper reverence for truth and holiness than he could claim.

Through the night, as he watched the glow-

ing coals making pictures of castle, and wall, and terrace, only to fall in ashen ruins; they seemed to him like the hopes and ambitions of life crushed by its stern realities. Yet, turning from these fleeting pictures, and looking up to the clear sky, where the moon shone resplendent, and the stars gleamed brightly, he knew that over all of seeming ruin and disaster there is an Eye which never sleeps, and an Arm of strength which never tires. The night passed, and the morning dawned.

It was not necessary that the boy should longer restrain his impatience to know of those at home. Rousing his sister from her slumbers, he led the way across fields studded with jewels of frost, and by the little brooks fringed with crystal drapery, without a thought of the beauty trodden beneath their feet. Intent upon reaching their destination, they cared for none of these things.

There was no one to meet them as they sprang into the long kitchen. The stillness was oppressive. They listened at the foot of the stairs; but not a sound could be heard, save the ticking of the old clock, which had stood in the hall for nearly half a century. Presently, however, their grandfather came

from his room with faltering step, and looking ten years older than he had looked the previous morning.

"Are you sick?" asked Jenny.

"No, dear, I'm not sick. I didn't sleep last night. Raleigh, my boy, it does me good to see you. You are my dependence. These dear little girls are a great comfort; but we must look to you to fight the battles for us all."

"You can trust me," replied the boy, with an earnestness which showed that he was not unmindful of his responsibilities.

"I think I can," said the old man. "If you fail me, I may well say that my purposes are broken off."

"How is John?"

Raleigh had been waiting for an opportunity to speak of his cousin, and now asked the question eagerly.

"Two hours ago he was no better. I have not heard from him since," was the reply. "Your mother said she would let me know if he was worse. The doctor was here all the first part of the night. Poor John must have a hard time at the best. He is a good boy. I wish I could do more for him."

"He's going to stay with us always, an't he, grandpa?" asked Jenny.

"I hope he will stay," was the reply.

"If he dies, his father will be his murderer," said Raleigh. I wonder how that man feels? I don't suppose, though, he has any feelings like other people. If he had, he wouldn't act so."

"Don't judge him too severely, my boy. He has the same feelings every drunkard has, only it may be that he's naturally more selfish than some others. If he'd give up the use of liquor, he might be a respectable man."

"It's too late for that," was the quick response. "We can't expect anything good from him. If he will only keep away from us, and Aunt Jane, and John, I sha'n't trouble myself about what becomes of him."

"You'll not be likely to see him again; and I ask, as a favor, that you will never mention his name to me again," said Mr. Bedlow. "Dr. Saunders will tell you more about him, if you wish to know more."

"And John, grandfather?"

"We hope he will get well. He has a good constitution, and he will have the best of nursing."

At the opening of this conversation, the old man had seated himself in an arm-chair, and now Jenny was standing beside him, with her arm thrown around his neck. "I love you, grandpa," she said softly, as if thus she would comfort him in his great sorrow.

"And grandpa loves you," he replied. "I don't know what I could do without any of you."

John Warland had been delirious, and there was danger of brain fever; yet rest and quiet might subdue the unfavorable symptoms, as all fondly hoped, and as the good doctor assured them there was some reason to expect. In the early morning, he slept for an hour, and this was cause for rejoicing. But there were no merry shouts, no glad anticipations, as one by one the family came together.

Mrs. Warland, who had watched all night by the bedside of her son, seemed to have no thought or feeling beyond anxiety for him. Since her conversation with Dr. Saunders, she had not spoken of her husband, and evidently avoided any reference to him.

Breakfast was eaten hastily, after which Raleigh and Jenny returned to the sugar-

camp. Mabel and Nellie chose to remain at home; the former hoping to lighten the burden which had fallen upon her friends, while the latter wished to help Aunt Jane. Later, Dr. Saunders visited his patient, and was able to report a decided improvement, although the danger was not yet past. Driving slowly, when he had reached the nearest point to South Orchard, he was accosted by Raleigh Bedlow, who had watched for his coming.

"Can you stop a minute, doctor?"

"Yes, ten minutes, if there's anything to be gained by it," he replied.

"Well, sir, I want to enquire about John, and John's father."

"I hope for the best for both of them. John is more comfortable than he was last night, and his father won't be likely to trouble anybody round here again at present. I started him off last evening."

"But where could he go? I don't see how he could have any money."

"His fare was paid to the place he chose for himself; and when there, he must do what he can. I hope your grandfather's family have done with him for ever."

"I hope so, too, sir; and if we have, I don't care what becomes of him."

"That's not right, Raleigh; though, to tell the truth, I felt much the same way when I went to see him yesterday. But when I left him last night, without his knowing where he should find a shelter after he left the cars, or how he was to get a meal of victuals after he spent the money I put in his hands, I pitied him from the bottom of my heart. He is as wretched a man as there is in the world, unless he has drowned his wretchedness in liquor. Your Aunt Jane never ought to see him again. There's no law of God or man that makes it her duty to live with him; but I couldn't help thinking it was hard for him after all. John is under no obligations to him. He has been no father to his boy; but I do believe the man has some human feelings. He was all broken down when I turned to leave him, and he asked me, with tears in his eyes, if I wouldn't shake hands with him. I couldn't refuse him; and he told me then, as he clung to my hand, that he knew he had treated his family like a brute, and deserved all he suffered. I reminded him that it was not too late to do better, and asked God to

give him a new heart and a right spirit. I tell you, Raleigh, it's a hard thing for a man when he realizes that he's entirely alone in the world because of his own wicked actions."

"He can do better, if he's a mind to."

"Yes, that is true; but in order to reform, a drunkard must have a terrible fight. It's like Christian with Apollyon in the old allegory."

"There's no need of being a drunkard."

"True, my boy; but there is only one safe way to keep clear of being a drunkard. Total abstinence is the doctrine that needs to be preached and practised. Nothing else will do."

"I know that, sir. I am going to preach and practise it all my life. Thank you for telling me about Mr. Warland and John. I can work a great deal better, now I know that man is gone."

The next day, Raleigh saw his cousin, who recognized him, and asked some questions in regard to sugar-making, adding: "I wish I could help you."

"You can help me about something else," was the cheerful reply. "It is better than help, to hear you talk like yourself. But I

won't stay to tire you. Mother charged me not to. Good-by."

"Cousin Mabel, I don't know what we should do without you," said the same thoughtful boy, as he joined Mabel Pease, who was standing by a south window in the sitting-room.

"I could echo your words," she replied. "I was very glad to come here; and I am very glad you are willing to acknowledge me as a cousin, and count me a member of your family. When Aunt Martha died, she left me alone. But she had told me of your grandfather, and at last I ventured to write to him. My guardian thought I might be contented to live in his family."

"I am glad you were not contented. But it seems strange that you should rather live here."

"It does not seem strange to me," replied the young girl. "This is a *home*, and Mr. Archer's house could never be home to me. After what you said yesterday, I should be more unwilling to live there than ever before. There is always wine on the table at dinner, and I have drank it myself."

"Why, Cousin Mabel, it is dreadful for you to do that. Don't do it again!"

"I never will," she answered decidedly. "I never heard any one talk about it as you did yesterday. I thought you spoke too strongly, but I'm not sure as you did. However that may be, you have made one convert to total abstinence."

"And who knows how much influence she may have! If all the women preached and practised total abstinence, the men would soon give up their liquor. That's what I believe, and that's what Aunt Jane says."

CHAPTER III.

THIS AND THAT.

MABEL PEASE was not thinking of clouds or of sunlight; yet she stood gazing at the southern sky long after she was left alone. The quiet and rest of the old farm-house were very grateful to her, and, as she had told Raleigh Bedlow, she was glad to be considered a member of the family.

Left an orphan when too young to realize the loss of her parents, she had lived with a maiden aunt until she was fourteen years of age. Death then robbed her of this relative, and she was left to the care of a guardian; who, immersed in business in a large city, had little time to bestow upon his ward. But he had been a friend of her father, and, so far as her pecuniary interests were concerned, was all which could be desired.

He took her at once to his own home, where she was received not unkindly by his wife;

yet, where everything was so new and strange to the young country girl, that with each succeeding day she felt her loneliness and bereavement only the more keenly. Welcoming any change that relieved her of the never-varying formality which chilled and repressed her ardent emotions, she was rejoiced to enter a boarding-school, where she might reasonably expect sympathy from those of her own age.

Here her experience was not unlike that of school-girls in general, who desire to improve themselves mentally, while enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse. She would willingly have prolonged the years of study ; but at nineteen she had finished the allotted course, and was then thrown upon her own resources.

True, Mrs. Archer had plans for her future, which only required her co-operation, to secure what this lady was pleased to term an enviable position. Unfortunately for these plans, however, Mabel had some old-fashioned ideas in regard to usefulness and happiness. These ideas, also, were deeply rooted, and their possessor could not be easily influenced to abandon them. Despite Mrs. Archer's

most persistent efforts, the marked individuality, which was the birthright of Mabel Pease, would assert itself.

"You are a miniature edition of your Aunt Martha," one day said her guardian, when Mabel had expressed herself strongly in regard to a question under discussion. "She was a handsome, lively girl, and a great favorite; but she had opinions of her own about everything; and when she had once made up her mind, it was of no use to try and change it, unless you could convince her by fair argument that she was wrong."

"I think Aunt Martha was a very lovely woman," replied her niece with emphasis.

"I agree with you there," was the quick response. "She was a very lovely girl. I was five years younger than she was, and she looked upon me as a boy long after I considered myself a young man. When I was fifteen, I was in love with her, and told her so. Of course she laughed at me in a kind way, and assured me that I should forget her before I was twenty-one. But I have never forgotten what she seemed to me then. So, Mabel, you cannot think more highly of your aunt than I did. But, for all that, I should

be glad to see you a little more willing to conform to the wishes of others. You have a comfortable fortune, and there is no reason why you may not enjoy a few years of gaiety and pleasure, before settling down to the cares of housekeeping."

"Perhaps I shall never settle down to the cares of housekeeping," answered the young girl lightly.

"Well, well, we won't talk about that. Time enough for that when you are older."

"Lovely, charming, beautiful." All these adjectives were used in describing Mabel Pease. Yet she had eccentricities. She *would* speak truthfully when called upon to express her sentiments; and she *would* follow the dictates of her own conscience, rather than the caprices of those with whom she associated. A season, which even Mrs. Archer pronounced a grand success, and which might have flattered an older and wiser woman than our heroine, did not materially change her estimate of life.

The fact that her immediate surroundings were not such as she would have chosen was conducive to this result; and while others were discussing the comparative merits of

fashionable resorts for the summer, she wrote to Mr. Bedlow, asking if he would allow her to spend a few weeks in his home. To this letter Raleigh, acting as his grandfather's amanuensis, had replied cordially; and the summer before the opening of this story, Mabel had come among them for the first time. Late in the autumn she went to her guardian's for the winter months, and had now returned to her country home, glad to escape the wearying round of frivolities, in which Mrs. Archer found her highest happiness. She knew that she could resist the influence of this lady, and in time surround herself with congenial friends; but there were reasons why she wished to establish new relations before becoming of age.

Mrs. Archer had a nephew who was a frequent visitor at her house, and whose attentions to Mabel were more marked than agreeable. The young man had studied the profession of law; but, too indolent to attempt the hard work necessary to gain distinction or large pecuniary reward, he had drifted on; until now, at thirty years of age, some change in his circumstances was imperative. He lived in bachelor quarters, in a style of easy ele-

gance, which had thus far been supported by property inherited from his father, and a small salary paid him by Mr. Archer for certain assistance in business. But a fortune upon which constant drafts are made will diminish rapidly ; while habits of self-indulgence become stronger and more expensive.

He was troubled by this state of affairs, which he did not care to conceal from his uncle, who told him plainly that he must go to work ; that it was a shame for a young man with his talents and acquirements to be spending his time to so little purpose. "It does for pretty girls, who have nothing to do but dress handsomely and spend their own or their fathers' money," remarked the gentleman. "It's a pity you and Mabel couldn't make an exchange of ideas. She wants to do something, somewhere, to benefit the world. You want to take life easy, and get all you can out of the world with the least possible effort. That's the way it looks to me. Now, isn't that true?" was asked good-humoredly.

"I can only speak for myself," replied Winthrop Hayes evasively.

"That's the only one I want you to speak for. I understand my ward, and, if occasion

requires, she can speak for herself. I wish you had more of her spirit."

"That's not a bad wish, sir. But it seems hardly necessary for Mabel to think of anything beyond her own enjoyment. If reports are true, she has an ample fortune."

"She has enough to support her comfortably," responded her guardian, looking sharply at the young man before him. "She will understand how to manage it too. She would make a good business manager, and I'm not sure but she would like to engage in business."

"Mabel Pease engage in business!" exclaimed Winthrop Hayes. "I can conceive of nothing more absurd."

"The idleness and dissipation of many of our young men is far more absurd," was the reply. "You may be sure of one thing in regard to Mabel: she will do as she pleases without consulting Mrs. Grundy."

"But, as her guardian, you can have some control over her."

"I manage her *property*, not *her*. She is getting of an age to act for herself. But all this talk has nothing to do with your affairs. What do you intend to do?"

"I don't know," replied the young man, with a shrug of his shoulders, which said more plainly than words, that the whole subject was disagreeable to him.

"But you must do something. There's Hilton, who started when you did. Somebody told me yesterday that he was doing a good office business, besides having made some pleas that attracted attention. You ought to have done as well as he has. You had more talent and better advantages."

"I think that is true. Hilton is a regular plodder. He has done nothing but plod since I first knew him. All the time he was getting an education, he worked at anything that would bring him a dollar, besides studying as though his life depended upon it," replied Winthrop Hayes impatiently.

"His *success* in life depended upon it. More than that, he has a mother and young sister who look to him for a home. I heard him pretty thoroughly discussed yesterday, and the general opinion is that he is a rising young man. To speak plainly, Winthrop, I wish you were more like him. Your aunt thinks a good deal of you, and so do I. It's plain to be seen that matters are going wrong

with you; and a man of your age must be gaining or losing. He can't stand still. Another thing—and you must not take it unkindly if I speak plainly—I am afraid you drink more wine than is good for you. I am no fanatic on the temperance question; but I know that many of our young men are in danger of drinking to excess."

"What is excess?" asked Mr. Hayes, glad to turn attention from his own personal habits.

"That depends upon circumstances," was the prompt reply. "When a man finds his face flushed, and his head whirling, after he has been drinking wine, he may be sure that he has drank to excess. You know what excess is as well as I do. You don't need to have this explained to you."

"You drink wine, Mr. Archer."

"That is true, and I consider myself a good judge of wine; but I never indulge in its use to the neglect of my business. I keep my head clear. And as for suppers, where our leading men drink wine and champagne until it is difficult for them to recognize themselves, they are a disgrace to all concerned. If a man can't drink moderately,

very moderately, he ought not to drink at all. That's my opinion; and, if I had boys, I'm not sure but I should go strong for total abstinence."

"Really, Mr. Archer, you have delivered quite a temperance lecture," said his companion laughing. "You talk nearly as strongly as Hilton used to; only he went for total abstinence, boys or no boys. I can't say that I do. I believe in a man's being able to manage himself."

"So do I, Winthrop. I believe in self-control, easy as I seem. But the trouble is that when one's brain is heated with wine, the power of self-control is lost. And such things grow upon a man. Once or twice in a lifetime don't count for much, but no one knows where they will end. There are men in the gutter to-day who, twenty years ago, had as good prospects as you have now. Yes, better; for they attended to business regularly. So you see it is possible that you may some time be where they are."

"You insult me!" exclaimed Winthrop Hayes angrily.

"No, I do not," was the firm reply. "I am telling you the truth this morning, because I

am your friend. You told me that things were looking dark to you, and you didn't quite know what was best for you to do."

"Yes, I did, and I have no reason to be offended at your plain speaking," said the young man, moved to this acknowledgment by motives of policy.

"That is right. We are all of us hasty sometimes. Now, you must set about reform and retrenchment. Apply yourself diligently to business. Earn more, and spend less. If you're like other young men, you'll be thinking of getting married and settling down to family life; and of course you can't do that unless you can provide for a family. I have wondered at your living a bachelor as long as you have."

"I must marry a rich wife—one who can provide for herself, and will count it a privilege to provide for me." This was said lightly, as though prompted by a momentary caprice; but Mr. Archer was too shrewd to be thus deceived.

"You will marry a very foolish woman, if you marry one who is willing to support you in idleness," was his reply. "A young man ought never to speak in that way. If I ever

see you attentive to a rich woman, I shall understand your motive, and consider it my duty to speak a word of warning."

For once, Winthrop Hayes was thoroughly dissatisfied with himself. Mr. Archer had neither flattered him nor offered him assistance. Moreover, it had been made reasonably plain to him, that in his efforts to win the favor of Mabel Pease, he could not count upon the influence of her guardian. Her character, as has been described, was not to his taste; yet he could not deny that she was very lovable, and very charming. As his wife, she would doubtless see the propriety of yielding to his wishes, and allowing herself to be guided by his judgment.

He was forced, however, to the mortifying conclusion that thus far he had made little progress towards the accomplishment of his purpose; and he went to his rooms, mortified with the result of his conference with Mr. Archer. He wondered if life could hold for him disagreeable possibilities.

He was vain, selfish, and conceited; yet he could be very fascinating and entertaining. Five years, before he had been considered an eligible match and was a great favorite. His

aunt flattered him; and although she did not know the exact amount of property belonging to Mabel Pease, she had decided that this young lady would make a fitting wife for her nephew. Her fondness did not wholly blind her to his faults, yet she was always ready to find excuses for them.

"You must expect him to indulge in a little pleasure before he settles down to life in earnest," she said to her husband, by way of apology for his want of application. "A good wife will make everything right for him."

"A good wife deserves a good husband," was the reply. "I should be sorry to see any one of my friends sacrificed upon the altar of Winthrop Hayes's selfishness. I have a warm regard for the young man; but, if he makes shipwreck of his own life, there is no reason why another should go down with him."

CHAPTER IV.

A DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

MR. BEDLOW entered the sitting-room, and Mabel Pease, unmindful of the tears which trembled in her eyes, turned her face towards him.

"Something troubles you," he said kindly. "What is it, child? Can I help you?"

"I don't know that you can," she answered with some hesitation. "Everything seems going wrong. I find no resting-place for my feet."

"There is the sure rock of ages—a firm foundation, which can never be moved. We can all plant our feet upon that rock—the poor as well as the rich. Besides, most folks would think you had everything to make you happy. You have money enough, so you can live to suit you."

"Yes, sir; and just now it suits me to live here. But Aunt Martha used to say that everybody ought to contribute something to

the good of the world; and the more people had, the more they should do. I am doing nothing."

"That's not quite true, child. To-day I have heard every one of the family say, 'I'm glad Mabel is here,' or 'What could we do without Mabel?' If we had been shut up entirely to ourselves, our calamity would seem greater than it does now. You are a great comfort to poor Jane. I can see that by the way she looks at you."

"Do you think so?" was asked eagerly.

"Certainly I do, child. You are a comfort to us all. We have lived in fear for a great while, and bad as it is, we have reason to be thankful that nothing worse has come. I believe John will live, and some time be as well as he ever has been. Thank God for that! It may be that he needed all this trouble and pain."

"How can that be, Mr. Bedlow? I suppose no discipline comes to us without a purpose; but how can this be necessary to John?"

The old man was silent for a moment after this question was asked, and Mabel was about to apologize for unintentional rudeness, when he said, "John's father was a wine-drinker;

and when John was a little boy, he would drink wine himself whenever he could get it. He had a natural taste for it, and it's likely he's got the same taste now; though I've thought lately that he had principle enough to let it alone. His love for his mother has kept him, and since he came here, he's been away from temptation."

"But it can't be that John would ever drink to excess. He is so refined and delicate, he would never do that."

"Why not, child? There never was anybody but what might fall, if they got on the wrong ground. I am an old man. When I was young, everybody drank; but it was an evil thing then, and the evil is visited upon children's children. It's different now from what it used to be, but there's a great deal of liquor drank nowadays. They say most all the rich folks in the cities drink wine."

"A great many of them do," replied Mabel. "But do you think every one who drinks wine is in danger of becoming a drunkard?"

"Yes, child, I *know* so."

"But every one does not become a drunkard."

"Oh! no; but, for all that, there is danger. Jane didn't think so when I warned her against marrying her husband. Lessons must be learned by experience, and experience is a hard master. Mabel, child, there's nobody in the world that has a right to tell you what to do, and what not to do; but I beg of you never to trust your happiness to a man who hain't a firm principle against drinking liquor of any kind. Such a woman as you are ought to do a great deal for temperance. You can have a great influence, and you're in duty bound to use it on the right side. Perhaps you hain't thought much about this?"

"No, sir, I have not. Mr. Archer drinks wine at dinner, and so does his wife. Most of their guests join them, and I have never thought there was any harm in it. But I know now that it is wrong, and my influence shall be against it. No one shall see me taste of wine again."

"If drinking wine is bad for you, it is bad for young men."

Mabel smiled, as she replied to this remark of her friend. "Yes, sir, I understand you. If I ever marry, my husband must be as strong a total abstinence man as I am."

"I'm glad to hear that, child. I've been anxious about you, and an old man like me must talk about his troubles, if he can find anybody to listen to him. I've felt to-day as though I'd got most through with this world, and my mind goes back to the old days. Jane never knew what hardship was when she lived at home. Her mother and I thought she was too good to work as the other girls round here did, and we sent her away to school. I never see a handsomer girl than she was when she come back. But she wan't contented to stay."

This last was said in a low, murmuring tone, as though the speaker was unconscious of giving utterance to his thoughts. How often he had lived over the days when Jane, *his* Jane, made the old house bright with her presence; flitting through the rooms like a sunbeam, and pouring out the gladness of her heart in rhythmic melody. He could close his eyes and see her as she was then—his own darling; dearer than his life.

But between that time and the present long years had intervened; years which had brought to the daughter the deepest suffering a woman may know, and to the father a

bitterness of disappointment no words could describe. Jane Warland's mother had died before the full extent of her calamity was known.

Too proud to acknowledge her unhappiness, the wretched wife forced back her tears, and mingled with the laughing crowd, herself the gayest of them all. Yielding to her husband, rather than rouse his anger by opposition, her better nature was fast losing its sway. She was a brilliant woman; she could command admiration; and but for her boy, whom she well-nigh worshipped, she would have been utterly reckless.

Yet she was slow to realize that the demon of the wine-cup was the bane of her life. She sipped the sparkling poison, dreaming not of danger. But there came an hour—an hour she could never recall without a shudder—when cruel, taunting words made her aware of her condition. Horror-stricken, she stood aghast at the ruin which threatened her; and then, with resolute will, put aside the tempting cup. Henceforth it was not for her to drown her sorrow, or dull her sense of pain. She could bear anything, rather than the loss of her own self-respect.

Gradually she retired from the circle in which it had been her ambition to shine, and devoting herself to home duties, sought to make amends for the past. To this her husband did not object. Indeed, his own extravagant habits made such large demands upon his purse that he was more than willing his wife should retrench her personal expenses. He cared no longer to hear her praised; and if he did not at this time regard her with positive dislike, his feelings were strangely at variance with his conduct.

Year by year he had fallen lower; his fortune decreasing, and his exactions becoming more intolerable. The house in which he had resided since his marriage was sold to meet the claims of creditors; and to his surprise, he found himself the possessor of less than a thousand dollars. In this emergency he appealed to his relatives, who in turn appealed to his pride and ambition, as motives for reform. They remonstrated with him, as they had often done before; and as a last resort, offered him pecuniary assistance, if he would give his attention to business. It was no time to assert his boasted independence. To obtain money, he must simulate penitence; and this

he did, while he cared only for means to gratify his love of intoxicating drinks. Every thought and feeling was absorbed by this passion. He removed his wife and son to a small, cheap tenement, providing for them nothing beyond the common necessaries of life. Once he would have scorned such a home for those who bore his name; now it mattered little to him.

Every possible precaution was taken to prevent an improper use of the money invested for his benefit, but he eluded the watchfulness of his friends, and within a few months was again deeply in debt.

Meanwhile, his wife sometimes suffered for the want of food. This need not have been; but she was too proud to make known her wants to her own relatives, and too fearful of consequences to betray them to her husband's family. The latter had offered to take John, and educate him as befitted his true position; and it had been only a spirit of opposition, which prevented his father from acceding to the proposal. The boy's mother could endure anything rather than this.

Experience had taught her many lessons of wisdom, and she knew if her son was to be

saved to himself and to her, he must be surrounded by influences which would develop in him great power of resistance and self-control. He could never indulge in the moderate use of stimulants. His choice lay between total abstinence and reckless dissipation. He had many traits of character which placed him far above his father; and yet he was born under the curse.

It is not necessary that I trace the gradual descent of this family from poverty to abject want. Theirs was no peculiar experience of wretchedness. All over our land there are wives and children, who have once known the comforts of luxurious homes, now working in close rooms to earn a meagre supply of the coarsest food; while husbands and fathers, false to every sacred pledge, and every obligation of duty, spend their time in drunken revelry and debauch.

Hastings Warland was at length cast off by his relatives, and driven from their doors, with the injunction never to return. Still, however, they repeated their offer to educate his son. But, with a fearful oath, he swore that no child of his should be a dependent upon their bounty.

This final repulse maddened him. He had no care for the future, no thought for the present. He would remain away from his miserable home for weeks, returning when he could not find shelter elsewhere, and seeming to know by intuition when his wife and son had earned enough to make themselves more than usually comfortable. He made no pretensions to any regard for them; yet he claimed their service, and appropriated the proceeds of their labor. Hoping to rid themselves of his presence, they removed to a neighboring city. But here he found them.

At last, driven almost to desperation, Mrs. Warland wrote to her father, accepting the assistance which had before been offered. Winter was upon them, and neither she nor her son could find employment. She concealed the money sent by her father; paid the rent of the rooms she had occupied for a month; and in the absence of her husband, started on her journey to her old home, where she was welcomed cordially and lovingly.

The cottage was repaired, and furnished comfortably. She could be happier there than in her brother's family, and she had already made plans for her own support,

when the man she most desired to escape entered her dwelling. How she loathed his presence: loathing herself also, that she had given him the right to call her wife! She might appeal to the law; but from this every feeling of delicacy revolted.

John Warland, now fifteen years of age, knowing that other men had been reclaimed from the depths of degradation, resolved to make one more effort to save his father. "Only this once," he said to his mother. "If we fail now, we will give him up, and I will stay with you, whatever comes. It seems as though he *would* do better with Grandfather Bedlow so near." Vain thought. The winter had been spent in useless efforts to reclaim him. No one in the town would sell him liquor, and yet he managed to obtain it. Never before had he been so utterly reckless of consequences.

Now it was all over. He had gone, they knew not whither; and so that he did not return, they were willing to remain in ignorance of his fate.

The days went by, some bright and glad with promise, others dark and threatening. There was sunshine and storm; the gentle

breeze which softly fanned the cheek of beauty, and the fierce wind which swept down hillsides and through valleys like a devastating host.

Gazing from the windows of his room, John Warland noted these changes, as slowly he regained health and strength. He was resting, yet never was his mind more active. The possibilities of his life passed in review before him, while he recalled the vicissitudes he had already experienced.

Childhood amid luxury and elegance. Tables glittering with silver, and spread with choicest viands. Feasts, and flow of wine. As a dream, these vanished, to be succeeded by cheerless rooms scantily furnished—a plain table, and the coarsest food. As a child, he had been clad in daintiest garments, and shielded from every annoyance: as a lad, he had dressed cheaply, and made his way with others who struggled for a foothold in the world.

He had sold papers, carried parcels, shovelled snow; and occasionally, for a few days at a time in busy seasons, been employed in a store, where he received regular wages. Yet, with all these discouragements, he had

procured such books as he required in school, and maintained his rank as a scholar.

Of course he had plans for the future, as what boy has not? He wished to be a merchant; to buy, and sell, and make a fortune—a grand, reliable fortune. If he could once establish himself in business, in even the smallest way, he would be so industrious, so honest, and so cautious, that he could not fail of success. His mother, too, should share his prosperity. Whatever he desired for himself, he desired for her far more and better. He had cast his lot with her, and no bribes could separate them. When first brought to his grandfather's, he had been made happy by the assurance that he could "stay always"; now he realized that this must not be.

"Where are we going when I get well?" he asked, as his mother came to his side, and laid her thin hand upon his shoulder.

"I think we shall stay here for the present," she replied. "You can help Raleigh about the farm, and I shall find some way of making myself useful. Why did you ask that question?"

"Because I have been thinking about it. I am growing older every day, and I ought to

get started in the business I am to follow. You must get the lawyers, or the judge, or somebody else—I don't exactly know who—to give me all to you, so no one else will have any claims upon me. You'll do that, won't you, mother?"

For answer, she kissed him silently; but this did not satisfy him. "You must," he said earnestly. "And you must get a divorce from your husband. Mother! mother!" he cried, startled by the pallor of her face, "I wouldn't say this, if I could help it; but no one else would speak to you about it. You know my mother is a proud woman," he added, with an effort at cheerfulness.

"You are right, my boy," was the mother's response. "I *am* a proud woman, notwithstanding all I have endured. You are right, too, in the other matter. I will do as you wish. God forgive me, if I do wrong."

It was well that this decision should be made; and with Mrs. Warland, to decide was to act. In these days, Mabel Pease had come very near to her with the sweet womanly sympathy and strong, vigorous purpose which characterized this young friend. Meeting Cousin Mabel in the hall

directly after her son had obtained from her the promise recorded above, she said, with some hesitation, "I find that I shall be obliged to burden some one with more of myself and my perplexities."

"Burden me," was the quick reply. "I have a vast amount of unappropriated energy, and shall be glad to make myself useful."

"But my burden is not a light one."

"Then all the more do you need help to carry it. Trust me, and don't hesitate to tell me if I can in any way give you assistance. Come to my room, and let us have a good talk in school-girl fashion. You shall sit in the large rocking-chair, and I will sit on a stool at your feet."

"That would be reversing the proper order, Cousin Mabel. *I* should sit at *your* feet."

"We will not quarrel about that," replied the true-hearted girl, throwing open the door of a large room which had been recently appropriated to her use. "It is pleasant here. Just the place for a confidential talk. There are the rocking-chair and foot-stool waiting to be occupied. Don't think me heartless, because I talk cheerfully."

"I don't think so, dear. I am thankful that you *can* talk cheerfully. You are a comfort to us all. I don't know how father could bear his troubles at this time, were it not for the help you give him with your words and smiles. I am sometimes afraid that you will be sorry you came here this spring."

"Sorry!" repeated Mabel. "I am more glad every day. I was tired of everything at Mr. Archer's. I am sure I was made for a different life from what I lived there. Do you know that I sometimes wish I had only money enough to buy plain clothes, and pay the house-keeping bills of a pleasant little house, where I could live cozily and economically. Then I should have something to think of, and something to do. Before Aunt Martha died, I learned some of her ways of doing things, and I like them."

"But the more money you have, the more good you can do," said Mrs. Warland; so much interested in her companion, that for the moment she quite forgot herself.

"I know that, Cousin Jane, and I hope to do some good. But the truth is, I have too many entanglements. Mrs. Archer has her plans for me; Mr. Archer has plans for me;

and I, Mabel Pease, am trying to form plans for myself. Now I have thrown off my own personal burden, and am ready to take another in its place. I shall be happy to assist you in any way which is possible to me. You must believe that, and also give me an opportunity to prove it. I can give you money; work for you; talk for you; or—"

"The last is just what I wish you to do," responded the elder lady hurriedly, interrupting her friend. "For the sake of my boy, I must have a divorce from my husband. I don't know how it is to be managed, and it seems impossible for me to make the necessary enquiries. I shall be very grateful to you, if you will talk with Dr. Saunders, and ask him how I am to proceed. He has a brother who is a successful lawyer, and he could easily learn how such things are managed. I know nothing of the expense which must be incurred; but please tell the doctor for me, that whatever it is, I will pay it so soon as I can earn the money. I have never before wished to know how divorces are obtained. I consider them dreadful, and disgraceful; but there are alternatives more dreadful, and more disgraceful. The time has been when I thought

otherwise; and there are those who believe that a woman should endure all wrong and outrage, rather than claim a release from her marriage vows. If they are right, then God forgive me, for I must claim this release."

CHAPTER V.

WOMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

OLD Dr. Saunders and his son, Dr. George Saunders, were in close consultation; when the former, seeing Mabel Pease walking rapidly towards the house, exclaimed, "What in the world sent that girl out at this time in the morning? There must be something wrong at Mr. Bedlow's. It can't be that John is worse. He seemed a good deal excited yesterday, when he got engaged in talking; but otherwise he was all right."

Mabel did not leave him long in doubt respecting his patient. She had ridden with Raleigh to South Orchard, and then taken the shortest path, through a narrow strip of woodland which separated the farms of Mr. Bedlow and Dr. Saunders.

"There is no one sick," she said after the first greetings. "If you are busy, I can wait

until you are at leisure. But I thought I would improve the opportunity to come early. I only wish to consult you in regard to some business."

"Business, child! What do you know of business?" responded the doctor, smiling down into her face, and leading her to the family sitting-room. "I can give you ten or fifteen minutes to tell me about it."

"Thank you. I think that will be sufficient," Mabel answered. "I have come in behalf of Mrs. Warland. She wishes to obtain a divorce from her husband, and she desired me to ask you how she should proceed. She knows nothing of what is to be done, except that she must in some way appeal to the law. She thought you might be able to tell her what to do, and she presumed upon your friendship."

"She has a right to presume upon it," was the quick response. "I will do anything for Jane Bedlow that I *can* do. If I ever pitied a woman, I pity her. Tell her from me that I will attend to the matter, and she shall have no annoyance from which I can save her. But there will be some. She must expect that. Both her father and her son have talked

with me about it, and I was only waiting for her to speak."

"Yes, sir; but she asked me to speak for her. I promised her that I would, and I wish I could bear all the annoyance for her. I don't think I should mind it."

"You would, if you were in her place, or in a similar place. Take warning from her fate. There are good men and true, worthy to be trusted with a woman's happiness; but they are not among those who tarry long at the wine, and count their own self-indulgence the first object in life. Remember that, will you?"

"Yes, sir, and thank you for the warning."

"Thanks are more than old folks generally get for their advice. But seeing the dangers in your path, I was constrained to speak. Dram-drinking is the curse of the land; and the *moderate social drinker*, man or woman, is responsible for this curse. It's likely that you've seen a good deal of wine-drinking in a social way."

"Yes, sir, I have."

"And perhaps drunk wine yourself."

"Yes, sir, but I shall never do it again."

"Then there's one young lady on the right side. Thank God for that! Don't let any one persuade you to go over to the enemy; and don't tolerate habits in a young man that you wouldn't tolerate in yourself. Give your whole influence in favor of total abstinence. Are you willing to do that?"

"Yes, sir, at all times, and under all circumstances," was the emphatic reply to this question. "But I am detaining you, sir."

"Detaining me?" laughingly said the doctor. "I think I have detained you to listen to my sermon. Your errand furnished me so good a text, that I could not refrain from preaching. Then, too, George and I have been talking of this very matter of wine-drinking. He is more opposed to it, if possible, than I am. Have you ever seen my son George?"

"No, sir; but I have heard of him as being a noble man, and a distinguished physician."

"He is all that, and I am proud of him," said the father. "He is devoted to his profession, and if he isn't a Christian, I don't know who is. I want you to see him." Here the door of the room was thrown open, and a

cheerful voice called, "George, please to come here."

Somewhat amused at her position, as she could not fail to be, Mabel Pease yet met the stranger courteously. Only that morning Raleigh Bedlow had spoken of him, and her quick intuitions at once endorsed the praises to which she had listened. He was acquainted in the city where her guardian resided, so that conversation flowed freely, and but for her thoughtfulness, she might have trespassed too long upon valuable time.

"That's a girl of a thousand," said the old doctor, when Mabel had bade them good-morning. "They say she is worth nearly a hundred thousand dollars; perhaps quite that; and she will soon have it in her own hands. Her father left her a good property, and her guardian has kept it so well invested that it has increased rapidly."

"More's the pity," replied Dr. George Saunders. "There are plenty of fortune-hunters on the look-out for an heiress, and if so be she is young and handsome, so much greater is her danger. Superior girls are often won by men whose only recommendations are a ready command of words, and a faultless style of

dress. Mr. Archer is a good, sensible man, as the world goes; but his wife is as frivolous and vain as a woman can well be. As I looked at Miss Pease, I wondered how the two could be happy under the same roof. But, father, if you wish to talk more with me about that case, you must do it this morning. I must stop to see mother on my way back. I am disappointed not to find her at home."

"I am sorry, but your Uncle Severus will be very glad to see you. He will think himself sure of getting well, if you prescribe for him."

The two men were soon busily engaged in discussing the various symptoms of disease, with reference to a case which had thus far resisted ordinary treatment; so that before Mabel Pease reached South Orchard, they had quite forgotten the interruption of her visit. She had accomplished her mission with less of embarrassment than she had anticipated, and yet her face was clouded.

"Why, Cousin Mabel, were you sent away with a reproof?" asked Raleigh, looking up from his work, as she came towards him. "You look as though something wrong had happened."

"I was not sent away with a reproof. My visit was a very agreeable one," she replied.

"Then why do you look so sober?"

"I have been thinking. I begin to feel that life is real, and should be earnest. But for all that, it need not be gloomy," added the young girl with a smile. "I was more than successful. I saw Dr. George Saunders, and talked with him."

"Isn't he grand?" exclaimed her companion.

"That is just what he is," was her response. "What a good, noble face he has. Such a face as never grows old. I wonder how your Aunt Jane could have preferred Hastings Warland to that man."

"I wonder too. But Dr. George Saunders was a poor student—though not so very poor, either. His father helped him all he could. But there were five other children, and George would take only his share. He had to work his way up. He couldn't give his wife such a home as that Warland could; and I suppose Aunt Jane didn't really know any better than to do as she did. She was only twenty years old when she was married; and everybody

says that Warland was very fascinating; though to see him now, nobody would think he could ever have been so much as agreeable."

"But your Aunt Jane loved him," said Mabel. "I am sure of that. She told me that she really idolized him at the time of their marriage, and she believed that her love was fully returned. I can't understand such infatuation. It seems impossible that he could wholly conceal his true character; and knowing what I do, I almost wonder that he should have chosen to marry her. She must have been very beautiful; but she was not rich; and men of his habits usually care for money."

Raleigh Bedlow was three years younger than his companion; yet they were accustomed to talk of different subjects with the utmost freedom; so that the present discussion was continued until a definite conclusion robbed it of its interest.

There was something in the sterling honesty, and bold, decided opinions of this cousin which challenged Mabel's warmest admiration; while he, in turn, regarded her as the embodiment of all womanly loveliness. She

had come to his home, an elevating, refining influence; giving a new impulse to every noble tendency. Meeting upon common ground; claiming no superiority on the score of acquirements or possessions; she was simply one of the family, to share the family life and contribute her measure to its happiness and improvement. She was interested in all which interested them, and encouraged Raleigh in every effort to make the farm more productive and profitable.

Her visits to the sugar-camp were more to her than the pleasure of fashionable assemblies. She knew the proceeds of each day's work, and the amount of profits which could be reasonably expected for the season. Then, too, she loved nature; and these visits afforded her rare opportunities for studying its changes. She watched the upspringing of tiny buds, and the unfolding of fragile ferns, where the waters of some bubbling spring kept the soil of an untilled garden warm and moist. She noted every new development of insect life, and marked the days with discoveries, which had for her a wondrous charm.

Jenny had often said that Cousin Mabel's

eyes were always wide open. This was true; while it was also true that her example incited others to watchfulness. Nor bird, nor bee, nor flower, escaped her notice; and without recognition of the fact, those with whom she associated caught from her the habit of seizing each flash of beauty as it passed.

This morning she had scarce a thought for anything disconnected with Jane Warland; and yet it seemed to her, that in some way her own life was linked with that of her friend. It could not be a mere chance which had thrown them thus together, and revealed to her so much of the heart history of a disappointed, despairing woman. As Raleigh glanced at her from time to time, he saw that she was still thinking seriously, and forbore to trouble her with questions.

"I must go home," she said at length. "I ought to have gone before. Your Aunt Jane will be anxious to know the result of my mission. I was not ready to meet her until now. I shall tell your grandfather that you are having a good day. Good-by."

If Winthrop Hayes had seen her, as she walked straight on to the old farm-house, with quick and vigorous step, he would

hardly have said what he was at that very time saying to his aunt.

"Mabel Pease must be bored to death with her country cousins. I have a vision of her, pale and disconsolate, sighing for the pleasures she has left behind. It would be an act of mercy for you to recall her from her seclusion. It was the strangest freak for her to leave as she did. She really needs a guardian who would assert his authority for her good. Do you know any cause for her abrupt departure from her dear five hundred friends?" asked the young man, as he lounged indolently in an easy-chair.

"I only know what she told me," replied Mrs. Archer. "She said she was tired of parties and flatteries, and longed for a breath of air with some vitality in it. That was her way of saying that she was disgusted with her manner of life here. I knew she was growing more and more dissatisfied every day; but I hoped some one would find a way to bind her with silken cords. As for Mr. Archer exercising any authority over her, he never did; and it would be absurd for him to do so now."

"She is of age soon, is she not?"

"You know about that as well as I do, Winthrop; and you know that I hoped the care of her property would be transferred from my husband to you. You could not have a better wife than she would be. She is very energetic, and you need a wife who has more energy than you generally manifest."

"It must be that you are right," replied the gentleman carelessly. "Mabel Pease has attractions, both solid and brilliant; and she has eccentricities also. She is fearfully old-fashioned in some of her ideas; and she is very tenacious of these ideas."

These remarks were supplemented with a yawn; but Mrs. Archer was not deceived by this affectation. After a little thought, she said, "If you think Mabel is sure to be tired of country life, there is an excellent opportunity for you to show your gallantry by escorting her back to the city."

"I might do that, but you see I am not in her neighborhood."

"It would be possible for you to reach her neighborhood. If you desire it, I will write to her this morning, and offer your services as an escort. Shall I do this?"

"As you please. I am at your service and hers."

The letter was written, and reached its destination the following evening, just as Mabel had seated herself quietly in her room with Mrs. Warland.

"Will you excuse me while I read this letter?" she asked, as it was placed in her hand.

"Certainly," replied her companion. "Don't mind me at all. It rests me to be with you, but you must not let my presence interfere with anything you wish to do."

"I must reply to this letter at once," said Mabel, in a tone which betrayed some annoyance.

"Do so, my dear, but I hope you are not going to leave us."

"Not at present, Cousin Jane. Mrs. Archer urges me to return at once, but I am not inclined to martyrize myself in that way."

"Does fashionable city life seem to you like martyrdom?" asked Mrs. Warland with a smile.

"*My* life in the city sometimes seems like that," was the reply. "If I should accept

this invitation, with the conditions annexed, I should be a martyr in a most inglorious cause. I shall not go to Mr. Archer's until the last of next month. Yet I must be civil in my reply to her very cordial letter."

"Cousin Mabel, if I had estimated country and city life as you do, I should not have been what I am now. I should have clung to this dear old home, and not allowed myself to be dazzled by the glare of false lights, and the glitter of tinsel trappings."

"That was not all which made the city seem to you so delightful."

"That was the charm at first, and the heart often goes with the fancy. I was a romantic girl, and fancied I had found my ideal."

"Better sacrifice yourself to a fancied ideal, than to one for whom you have neither love nor respect."

"True, Mabel, but *you* must not sacrifice yourself in any way. There is work for you to do. It seems to me if I were in your place, I could do a world of good."

"Tell me how, Cousin Jane. That is just what I wish to know," quickly responded Mabel Pease, turning to look at her cousin,

whose face was radiant with unwonted animation.

"When you have written your letter, then I will tell you what I have thought," was the reply.

A few fitly-chosen words sufficed to express the writer's thanks for all courtesy and kindness; and also to assure Mrs. Archer that her return to the city could not be expected, until business demanded her presence. Moreover, she was accustomed to travelling alone, and there was no reason why she should not continue to do so.

"Now, Cousin Jane, my task is accomplished, and I wait for my reward," she said as she sealed her note. "I may as well tell you that I am puzzled to know what disposition I shall make of myself, when I reach the mature age of twenty-one. That is not very old; but since I came here this spring, I have been maturing fast. Besides, I see the world and the manners of the world in a different light."

"It is not strange that you do, Mabel. You have seen a new phase of life; a dark phase too. Pray God you may never know how dark. Perhaps you needed to learn some

lesson, which your experience here has taught you."

"I know I did."

"And the lesson—"

"Has been learned, and will never be forgotten. But how can I do a world of good?"

"What is the lesson you have learned?"

"That wine-drinking is a sin and a shame. That it leads directly to drunkenness and poverty. Why, Cousin Jane, I believe it is the curse of the land."

"I know it is," replied Mrs. Warland with great earnestness. "I know it is. No one need tell me that drinking wine is a safeguard against the immoderate use of coarser liquors. I know it is not so. The rich and fashionable are responsible for the drunkenness of this country. More than that, I believe that a large measure of the responsibility rests upon woman."

"I had not thought of that," said Mabel musingly.

"How many women, young or old, do you meet in society, who condemn the use of wine? How many who do not, on some occasion, drink it themselves?"

"I fear there are not many," was the reply to these questions. "I have often seen a young lady touch a glass to her own lips, and then offer it with a smile to some gentleman, who received it as a flattering mark of favor. I never did that, Cousin Jane. Not because I am any better than those who *have* done it, but because I had a general feeling that young men are likely to drink enough without any such temptation."

"Indeed they are. But did you never drink wine in company with gentlemen? That is a direct question, and perhaps I should apologize for asking it."

"No, you should not," answered Mabel. "I have tasted wine many times, and sipped a little when I thought courtesy demanded it. My head rebelled against much indulgence; but I never thought of it, as an act for whose moral consequences I should be accountable. I know you will wonder at my stupidity; yet I must say, that until recently, I never thought of moderate drinking as leading to drunkenness. I had no definite ideas in regard to it. I suppose it was because I never thought seriously of the subject anyway. It did not come

home to me, as one in which I was personally interested."

"But you *were* personally interested, Mabel. Every woman in the country is interested. There are but very few families where dissipation and drunkenness have not fallen like a blight. You may not see it. People are in the habit of hiding the skeleton, but its presence is no less terrible. Cousin Mabel, you have beauty, and all the attractions of youth. You have money, too, and you can do what you please. I am not saying this to flatter you. You knew it all before I told you. But with all these gifts, God puts upon you a great responsibility. You can do good in a thousand ways which your own good sense and kind heart will suggest. But, in addition, you can be a temperance reformer, using your influence to further the cause of total abstinence. You can help to make it popular."

In reply, Mabel Pease did not say, as many *have* said, "I am but one of the multitude. I can do nothing alone. The evil is so great, it is useless to attempt its suppression." On the contrary, she said, "I will do what I can. That will be but little, compared with what needs to be done; but I will at least do my

duty. Cousin Jane, do you think there are many women in the country who drink to excess? I don't mean among the poorest and lowest, such as we sometimes see staggering through the streets; but among people who consider themselves respectable."

"I am sorry to say that I think there are very many," answered Mrs. Warland. "I have myself drunk wine to excess. I have been so intoxicated that I was hardly conscious of what passed around me. Never but once. Never but once, and then the horror passed. I vowed to my God that never again would I taste the poison drink. From that time I have loathed it." She might have added truthfully, "From that time I have loathed the presence of my husband."

She covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out some fearful sight. Yet still it rose before her. Brilliantly-lighted rooms; the flashing of jewels, and the gleaming of white arms; music, and the fragrance of flowers; the subtle fumes of wine, and whispered words of passion she but half comprehended.

From the crowd her husband pressed forward, and pleading his own indisposition as an excuse for their departure, led her from the

room. A carriage was called, and she reached home in a state of stupid intoxication.

Often had her husband returned to her in a like state, and as often had she received him without reproaches. In the first years of their marriage, she had tried in a gentle, loving way, to influence him; yet never had he acknowledged that she had reason to feel herself injured by his conduct.

But now *his honor* was sullied. His feelings were outraged. No man could forgive such conduct in a wife. He waited only until she could appreciate her condition, when, gazing at the beautiful woman he had lured from the simple habits of her childhood, he exhausted his rage in words which would pollute the ears of the vilest outcast.

She heard it all in silence; first with quivering lips and dewy eyes; then with eyes dry as stones, and lips from which white teeth pressed the crimson blood.

Up to that time, Jane Warland had loved her husband. Thenceforth, duty's stern demands, rather than affection's law, swayed her life.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFESSION AND DIVORCE.

ONE dreary winter evening, Mr. Bedlow, anxious for his daughter's comfort, sent Raleigh to visit her, and, if necessary, to remain through the night. Her husband had been away since early in the morning, and could not be expected to return for many hours.

"I am so glad you have come," exclaimed John, as his cousin entered, bringing a well-filled basket. "Mother and I have been lonely. Hickory-nuts too. That was a kind thought in you."

"That was grandfather's thought. He said it was a good evening to crack nuts, roast apples, and drink cider; only your mother don't quite approve of cider."

"But *I* do," replied John. "I wholly approve of it. I have drunk it when it was sparkling as champagne."

"That is why I disapprove of it," said Mrs.

Warland with a sigh. "O boys! I wish I could make you feel about such things as I do."

"Why, Aunt Jane, do you think there is any danger of our becoming drunkards, because we drink some cider once in a while?"

"I don't think there is any danger of *your* becoming a drunkard, Raleigh. Your father was a consistent temperance man. But it is different with John. He must fight an inherited appetite. No one is really safe who drinks moderately."

"But there are a great many people who drink moderately all their lives. You know that, Aunt Jane."

"Yes, I do know it. But there are not so many moderate drinkers as are counted such. You don't know their private life. You don't live with them day after day, and see them when they are free from all restraint, except such as they impose upon themselves."

"You are right, Aunt Jane. You know a great deal more about it than I do; and I don't know what made me provoke you to an argument. I hate liquor-drinking as bad as you do; and moderate or not, there is no need of it."

"So do I hate it," added John. "I should think I had reason to. But I don't see why mother need be so particular about cider. Grandfather always drinks it, and I don't a bit doubt but what mother used to drink it herself."

"I did, and there was a time in my life when I drank wine and champagne."

"And you didn't get drunk either," was urged in reply.

"Yes, I did," she answered, the words dying out in a wailing sob. "Sit down here, and let me tell you all about it," she added with great effort. "I shall never have courage to tell you, unless I do so to-night. Don't hate me, boys. It was a terrible thing, but I believe God has forgiven me."

"Hate you!" murmured her son, throwing his arms around her. "I couldn't do that. But it don't seem possible that my mother—"

Here the boy laid his head upon his mother's shoulder, and wept bitterly; while Raleigh turned away to wipe the tears from his eyes.

"I must do myself justice," at length said Mrs. Warland. "I cannot have you think

worse of me than I deserve. It may not seem generous, but I am unwilling to bear more of blame than belongs to me."

"Don't, mother. Tell us all about it, and put the blame just where it belongs. I don't doubt but what father was at the bottom of it."

"He was," she replied softly. "Yet I ought to have had more principle. I began by yielding a little, and drinking because it was fashionable. Raleigh, shall you despise me after this?"

"No, indeed, Aunt Jane. Why should I?" answered her nephew.

Nuts were forgotten, and the rosy apples stood untasted, while this woman described with startling minuteness her gradual enslavement by the siren of the wine-cup. There were frequent pauses in the narrative; but at length it was all told. The wind howled, the storm raged, and the fire burned low on the hearth; yet this group within the cottage heeded neither wind, nor storm, nor increasing cold.

Thus did Jane Warland make her first confession. To the second, only Mabel Pease listened; and with rare delicacy, the young lady

offered neither question nor comment. She did not count her friend one whit the less worthy of esteem; and the evening had not passed, before she found opportunity to say this without referring to what had transpired.

Her own previous resolves were strengthened. Now that she had been made to realize the terrible effects of fashionable dram-drinking, she wondered that she had not discovered them for herself.

John Warland, too, had ample time to form his plans anew, and fortify himself against temptation. His mother would be free, and with her freedom, his own would be secured. Good Dr. Saunders would permit no unnecessary delay in the business entrusted to him.

When the showers of April had swept away the last vestiges of winter's snow, the cottage, which had been closed since the first of March, was reopened; and it was known somewhat generally that Jane Warland would be glad of employment as dressmaker or plain seamstress.

Her relatives had objected to this; her father assuring her that the resources of the old farm were sufficient for all; yet she was not deterred from her purpose.

"I have had my full share from the old farm," she answered cheerfully. "I thank you all the same. But I have earned my own support under greater difficulties than I shall meet with here, and I cannot be dependent. I shall be almost happy, when I am fairly established in my business. There is work enough here to be done, and I think I am the one to do it."

Dr. Saunders commended her, adding, "I know in one way it seems hard. But that is more than counterbalanced by what you will gain. I want to see the color come back to your cheeks, and the old light shine in your eyes. John is going to be strong enough to help Raleigh this summer, and everything promises well for you all. You must let an old man say his say, and I tell you you are better off to-day, than you have been any time before, since you went to Mr. Beman's to spend a year and learn city ways. That's what I think."

"I think the same," she answered. "My friends have done more for me than I had a right to expect; and now I hope to do for myself."

"Your father's house was always open to

you. You should have come home sooner than you did."

"Situated as I was, I never felt at liberty to do so. I was very proud, too, and I could bear some things among strangers, better than I could bear them here. Knowing that I *could* come whenever I thought best gave me strength to struggle on. I have much to be thankful for; and not the least of my blessings are the two friends who always speak to me encouragingly. You and Mabel Pease would have me believe that there is something left for me in life, after all I have suffered."

"There is," replied the doctor with emphasis. "If I remember right—and I guess I do—you are hardly thirty-eight years old. There may be forty, fifty years of life before you; and if you are as sensible a woman as you ought to be, you won't feel it to be your duty to wear sack-cloth and ashes all that time, because you made a mistake when you were twenty. I'm not making light of your troubles, child; and I'm not making light of marriage-vows either. But what our Saviour allowed must be right; and when a woman has borne enough, and made up her mind that it's not

her duty to bear any more, there's no reason why her conscience should accuse her of doing wrong, when she appeals to the law for the right to live in comfort and safety. I don't know what would happen if all the incorrigible drunkards in the country were deserted by their wives and children; but I've thought sometimes I should like to see the experiment tried. If the tables were turned, and the majority of drunkards were *women*, instead of *men*, there wouldn't be so much forbearance. I know that, and I wish there was less now."

"But, Dr. Saunders, if one of these drunkards was a member of your own family, I think you would feel that every possible means should be used to reclaim him; even though this involved a great sacrifice on the part of others. It has been proved that the lowest and most degraded may rise to a respectable position."

"I know it," said the old man with a shake of his head. "But I was speaking of *incorrigible* drunkards; and then there is one consideration, which with me outweighs all others. The children of drunkards are born under the worst conditions; and the sin of transmitting

to another generation the tendency to drunkenness is a fearful one. Forgive me, Jane," added the speaker, interrupting himself. "In my earnestness, I forgot some things I ought to remember."

"There is no need to ask my forgiveness," she replied. "I think I know all you would say; and I know, too, that the curse which rests upon her children is the hardest of all for a drunkard's wife to bear. The mother of a drunkard's children is, of all women, the most to be pitied. I have but one, and it will break my heart if he goes wrong."

"I believe he will do right, and be a blessing to you," quickly responded the doctor. "This last trial has impressed him, as perhaps nothing else could. Then, too, Raleigh's companionship will do a great deal for him. That nephew of yours is a remarkable boy. He was always above the average of boys; but since Mabel Pease came here, he has developed wonderfully."

All this was but preliminary to a conversation from which both Mrs. Warland and Dr. Saunders would gladly have been excused. It was necessary to speak of the divorce then pending; and many of the visitor's remarks

had been made for the purpose of reassuring his friend; who even now sometimes reproached herself for the decision she had made.

"I don't think it will be necessary for me to trouble you again in this matter," he said as he was about to leave. "I would have spared you this if I could. My wife is coming over to-morrow to see about some sewing she wants done. I told her she had better speak in season."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY.

THE last day of April Mabel Pease reached her guardian's, and, to her surprise, found that a party had been arranged for the following evening.

"Winthrop and I felt that your birthday should be celebrated," said Mrs. Archer. "I have engaged Mrs. Le Moille to have a dress made for you in season; so there is nothing for you to do but select the material. I told her your selections were always quickly made, and she would have ample time. Everything has been arranged as we thought would please you. I hope you will enjoy meeting your friends."

"I always enjoy meeting my friends," answered Mabel; adding directly with more of cordiality, "It was very kind in you to think of giving me a birthday party. I suppose it will be proper for me to appear in a new

dress, and I will take care that Mrs. Le Moille has as much time for her work as is possible under the circumstances."

This last was said a little wearily; and later, Mrs. Archer told her nephew that she was afraid Mabel cared very little for the party. More than this was true. The very thought of it was a weariness. Yet the morning found her cordial, cheerful, and animated.

"Winthrop ordered the flowers, and he is sure you will be pleased with them," remarked the hostess.

"I have no doubt that I shall," was the reply. "Mr. Hayes has admirable taste in the selection of flowers. He knows how to blend both color and perfume in delightful combinations."

"I suppose business must be delayed until a more convenient season," said Mr. Archer, when he met his ward at an early dinner.

"I suppose it must," she replied with a smile. "Pleasure takes the precedence."

"Yes, and I don't object to it. But with the pleasure, I wish to impose upon you a responsibility. Some of our young men are in

danger of drinking to excess, whenever wine is placed before them; and I wish you to prevent their doing so this evening."

"What would you have her do?" asked Mrs. Archer impatiently.

"Mabel will know what to do. Young ladies can always find a way to manage such things when they choose to. For one, I am getting disgusted with the intemperate habits of our young men; and if such scenes occur here, as at the last party I attended, I shall be both mortified and indignant."

"I saw nothing at that party but what was beautiful and pleasant," remarked the lady, who regarded all which her husband had said as entirely out of place.

"That was because you were not behind the scenes," he answered. "I don't know where our strong, staunch business men are to come from, unless there is some change in the habits of the present generation."

"They are coming from the ranks of teetotalers," said Mabel Pease. "If you will consent to my proposal, I will engage that no young man shall taste of wine this evening. Provide no wine, and I am sure that no one of the guests will bring it here."

"You are right, Mabel, and I don't know but I shall be brought to such a stand. But I am not quite ready for it yet. I believe that men can drink moderately without making beasts of themselves."

"I suppose they can, but I am afraid there are comparatively few who do."

"For mercy's sake, let us have no more of this," exclaimed Mrs. Archer, rising from the table. "Mabel has strange notions enough now without any addition. Young men must be expected to indulge in some excesses. For my part, I never see any such dreadful things as you talk about."

The subject was dismissed for that occasion, but she in whose honor the evening's entertainment was given did not dismiss it from her thoughts. It was observed that she refused to taste of wine; and this she did in so conspicuous a manner that it could not fail to attract attention. Moreover, when asked by her admirers in regard to what seemed to them a mere caprice, she frankly avowed her teetotal principles.

Advocated by her, the fanatical doctrine was shorn of half its terrors. Many a glass remained untasted. Many a brow was mantled

with the blush of shame at memory of what had been.

"I want to thank you for what you have done this evening," whispered a fair young girl, as the company was about dispersing. "You have saved my brother for this once, and my father and mother will thank you in their hearts. I wish I was as brave as you are. Jason is always sorry when he grieves us, but he is not strong to resist temptation. You saved him this evening. Good-by."

Jason Myers himself lingered longer than etiquette demanded, as he said, "You have made this a delightful evening to us all. I thank you."

Winthrop Hayes, quick to see the rôle which should be played, was so abstemious as to provoke much of raillery ; yet he was dissatisfied with the whole affair. It had not been to him a delightful evening. With Mrs. Archer and himself this party had been considered a grand stroke of policy ; but he knew that instead of furthering their purposes, it had only made them more difficult of attainment.

Having reached his rooms, it occurred to him that he must decide in regard to some

business matters which demanded immediate attention. His principal creditor was clamorous for a settlement; and unless assistance was received from some quarter, he would be obliged to sell the last piece of real estate upon which he had any claim. It was not a pleasant alternative.

He had made a discovery, too, which did not add to his happiness. He loved Mabel Pease. She seemed to him the one woman in all the world for whose approval he cared. Egotist as he was, for a time this one fact outweighed all other considerations. In another mood, he might calculate how she could be induced to echo his own thoughts, and regulate her entire life to suit his pleasure. Not so now. He only thought of winning her for his bride.

When morning dawned, his decision was made. Nothing could be gained by further delay, and he was resolved to know his fate. He went to his aunt's, and found Mabel alone. Her greeting was cordial. She had taken her first step in the work to which she had pledged herself, and the world looked bright to her. If Winthrop Hayes had thought to tell her of his love in set phrase and studied speech, his

intentions were frustrated by her very cordiality.

"And you really love me!" she exclaimed in reply to his impetuous words.

For answer to this strange exclamation he could only repeat what he had before said.

"I am sorry," she responded gently. "I can never love you. Until this moment I have never believed that you loved me."

"How could you doubt it?" he asked.

"Appearances are often deceitful," she answered, with a frankness which quite surprised herself. The words, so frequently heard from Grandfather Bedlow, came unbidden to her lips, and she had uttered them. "Pardon me," she added gently.

"You are pardoned," he replied. "But is there no hope for me?"

"There is everything for you to hope," said Mabel Pease with sudden animation. "I am not the woman to make you happy. I know that, and you will see the day when you will know it too. But there is everything for you to hope and expect in life."

"Except the one object which can make life desirable," he exclaimed bitterly. "You mock me. Why should you?"

"Why should I?" she repeated. "I would not mock you. I *do* not mock you. I have but told you the truth. You have ability to win a high position in the world. If I were in your place, I would achieve something worth living for."

"But I am denied what I most desire. Mabel Pease, you are heartless. I did not come to you for—"

"Dictation," she said, completing the sentence. "Mr. Hayes, I know you will think me quite unlike all other young ladies; but I assure you that I am not heartless. How could I be? I am alone in the world, and I often crave love and sympathy which are denied me."

"O Mabel! I would give you so much; all that your heart could desire. Let me hope that I may some time win you."

"No, Mr. Hayes, that can never be," was the firm reply. "It is worse than useless to prolong this conversation. I shall leave the city within a month, and when we meet again, I trust—" Here she paused for a moment, and her visitor was about to bid her good-morning, when she exclaimed in a voice of passionate earnestness, "Why don't you

throw off your indolent, extravagant habits, and be the man you ought to be? You are ruining yourself. You are squandering your property, and wasting your strength. I have but told you the truth," she continued, as he looked at her in a wondering, incredulous way. "Very likely it is not a proper thing for me to do. But if you were my brother, I should speak more plainly."

"If I cannot be more to you than a brother, I wish I was even so much as that," said the young man, whose astonishment overcame his anger; and who, now that his last hope had failed, was utterly despondent. For the time, his pride and arrogance were as though they had never been. Then, too, his companion so well understood him, that all attempts to conceal any part of the truth seemed a mere waste of effort.

Three months before, Mabel Pease would have denied his suit, and dismissed him from her presence with but little thought of his future. Now, she longed to do him good; to exert an influence which would rouse him to noble endeavor.

It may be that the love he professed for her—the reality of which she could no longer

doubt—had much to do with this change in her feelings. Certain it is, that the scenes through which she had passed, and the lessons she had learned in Grandfather Bedlow's home, were not without their effect.

In her presence was a man of good natural abilities, with a finished education, and a pleasing personal appearance. For want of energy, principle, and self-control, this man, so richly dowered, was in imminent danger of sinking to the lowest depths of poverty and degradation. Could he be saved? Was it possible so to rouse his ambition, and stir his long-dormant conscience, that he would make the necessary effort to stand in his place, honorable and useful?

"Mr. Hayes, if you would let me talk to you, as I should talk to a brother, or as it seems to me I should talk to a brother, I should be very glad to do so. Wait a moment, please," she continued. "I am quite sure I should say a great many things you would not enjoy hearing."

"Say them," was the reply. "You have told me some plain truths, and I may as well hear all. I am a miserable, idle fellow. I know that better than you do, and I know,

too, that I am getting to be a poor man. I do believe I should do better, if— But I'll not weary you with protestations. Only this, Mabel. Whatever motive I may have had for seeking your favor in the past, I beg of you to do me the justice to believe that I love you. In comparison with your own dear self, your fortune is nothing to me now."

"I do believe it," she answered softly; and yet she knew that had he gained his suit, and her fortune been placed in his hands, it would not have long sufficed to meet his extravagant demands. "But we will forget that," she added. "For the next half-hour, I wish you to imagine that I am your sister; or, what would be better still, a friend, who would be glad to see you one of the grandest men in the country. I have a story I wish to tell you. I learned it while I was in the country, and it seems to me better than a sermon."

Assent was given, and Mabel Pease proceeded to narrate the history of Hastings Warland. At the close of her narration, she pronounced this name; when her companion exclaimed: "I have seen that man. I am acquainted with some members of his family, and I have heard that his wife was very beautiful."

"She must have been marvellously beautiful, before she had so much trouble and sorrow. The wife of a man who indulges in the immoderate use of intoxicating drink soon learns what trouble is. She can know nothing of quiet, restful happiness. If the present seems prosperous, she knows there is danger in the future."

"Do you mean to say that the man, who is not a fanatical teetotaler, is in danger of becoming such a brute as to destroy the happiness of his wife?" asked Winthrop Hayes excitedly.

"I *do* mean that," was the reply. "Knowing what I now know, and feeling as I do, I wonder any woman dares trust such a man."

"You would not, Miss Pease."

"I would not," she answered. "As Aunt Martha used often to say, 'Men and women are none too good when they do their very best, and make the very most of the talents God has given them.' I wish people *would* do their very best."

"I wish they would, Miss Pease, and I thank you for telling me the truth. Good-morning."

CHAPTER VIII.

A NEW BEGINNING.

HORACE HILTON was in his office, examining some documents pertaining to an important case which had been entrusted to his care, when the door was opened, and Winthrop Hayes appeared.

"Come in, and take a seat. Fine morning this," said Mr. Hilton, as he carefully folded the paper he had been reading.

"Thank you for the invitation, though I doubt if it was given willingly," replied the visitor. "Hard-working men, like you, have little time to bestow on such as I. But for all that, Hilton, here I am, and here I shall stay for a while, if you will allow me to do so. I shall interrupt your work, and you must make me pay for it. Don't insist upon cash, though; for, to tell the truth, I am getting too poor for that. I can do a job of

copying, and save your hiring it done. You don't do your own copying, do you?"

"No, Hayes, I am obliged to have help. My sister copies for me. We have established a sort of partnership, and share the profits of our business. But it is so seldom that I see you, since we were in college together, that I must be very hard-pushed not to have time for a chat this morning. I am busy, but it will do me good to rest."

"So you don't want any help about copying, or other office-work? I am sorry for that. I know a poor fellow who needs work; and I thought perhaps you would help him. He was in college with you, and was admitted to the bar about the same time you were. But he had a few thousands of dollars, and thought he could live at his ease. Besides that, he was lazy and extravagant. Had a fancy for choice wines, and the best cigars; all of which cost money. *You* don't know anything about such expenses. But you see *I* do, and they count up wonderfully. I know exactly how that poor fellow feels, now he is in debt, with no means of paying his debts; unless he sells the last piece of real estate that he owns. It is a pity for him to

do that. In five years, that piece of real estate will be worth five times what it is now. The poor fellow don't seem to have any friend to help him; so I thought I would start out this morning, and see if I could find some work for him."

All this was said in a half-mocking tone. Yet the speaker did not conceal the fact that there was a serious purpose underlying the affected carelessness.

"To whom do you refer?" asked his companion, looking him full in the face.

"To Winthrop Hayes," was the reply. "Perhaps you don't remember him. But he remembers you; and would gladly give the fortune he has squandered, had he followed your example."

"It was not necessary for him to do as I have done," replied the hard-working lawyer. "But I know it would have been better for him to attend to study and business, rather than idle away his time, and spend his money for what has profited him nothing. He had every opportunity for taking a good position in the world; and I sometimes half envied him for his advantages."

"You don't envy him now, Hilton."

"I certainly do not; but there is enough left of him to make a first-rate lawyer, and an honorable man. To drop the third person, and talk straight to the purpose; what is there in the background of your picture? If you please to lift the veil, I shall be glad to look beyond it."

"I please to lift the veil; although you must have seen through its cobweb folds. I have just waked up to a realization of my foolish life, and I am anxious to make a new beginning somewhere. Moreover, I am a poor man, and necessity compels me to work. My sins have been set in order before me, and if there is the making of a man left in me, I shall be thankful to any one who will help me find it. I had no right to expect help from you. I know, better than you can tell me, that I have no claim upon you. But I thought perhaps—" Here Winthrop Hayes, who prided himself upon saying the right thing at the right time, paused, for want of words to express his thoughts. Yet not long after, he added: "I knew you were always ready to help the poor and miserable."

"You are not poor, and you ought not to be miserable," replied his companion. "If

you feel that you have wasted your life up to the present time, only yourself can redeem the past; and you cannot but know that, in order to do this, you must reform your habits. Are you ready for such a reform?"

He to whom this question was addressed answered quickly: "I am ready."

"Do you know all that implies, Hayes?"

"I think I do," was the response. "I have counted the cost, Hilton. I have not slept for more than forty-eight hours; and if there is a wretch on the face of the earth who despises himself, *I* am that wretch. One of two things I have resolved to do. I shall rid the world of my presence, or make myself fit to live in it. I prefer to do the latter."

"Prefer!" repeated Horace Hilton somewhat sternly. "Your life is not your own. It was given to you by God; and he will require it at your hands, when he sees that your work here is accomplished. You can retrieve the past if you will."

"Do you believe that?" was asked eagerly.

"I know it, and what I can do to help you shall be gladly done. But I cannot carry your burden, or fight the battle with your

appetite. You must do that with only God's help, and you cannot do it without his help. You know I profess to be a Christian, Hayes; and what religion I have is always present with me. So if you are with me, you must expect to be often reminded of your duty as one of God's children. I have no sympathy with the flippant talk, in which so many men indulge: as though our relations to the Creator of the universe were of small importance. I believe in God with my whole soul. I adore him as the Eternal King, and I love him as the Father of all who dwell upon the earth. Whatever courage I have exercised in days of darkness; whatever success I have achieved in days of brightness; I owe it all to my unwavering, unfaltering trust in God. If this avowal of my faith seems to you quite unnecessary—and I presume it does so seem—you may some time see cause to change your opinion. Now to business, unless you have something further to say."

"What more can I say?" was the reply. "Before to-morrow night, I must make a settlement with an importunate creditor; and I have only the one piece of property I have described to you. If I could make myself use-

ful, I would be glad to work for you at almost any price. I must come down in the world. I expect nothing else. But I cannot say that I am quite ready to go through the streets, begging for work. You see I don't look like that," added Winthrop Hayes, glancing at his fashionable attire. "I made up my mind to come to you ; and if I found you disposed to listen to me, I resolved to tell you my story. Very likely, you wish I had gone somewhere else with my troubles, and left you to attend to your own business."

"On the contrary, I am glad you came here," said Mr. Hilton. "I shall be glad to help you. I will give you a seat in my office as long as you use neither tobacco nor intoxicating drink of any kind. I cannot afford to hire work done I can find time to do myself. But my business is increasing ; and if you accept my terms, I may be able to give you something to do. Not enough, by any means, to support you in your present style of living."

"I shall change my style of living at once, and I accept your terms. But what proof have you that I shall keep my word ?" was asked with something of the old manner.

"None whatever, Hayes. I shall take care not to injure myself in trying to assist you; and if you are idle, when you should be at work, I shall work the harder; while I shall have a vacant seat in my office."

This was said not unkindly. Yet the listener knew that he had to do with one who could not be easily deceived, or lightly turned from a well-considered purpose. For a moment, the two regarded each other in silence.

Then, as if the thought of all which had been, which was, and which might be, surged through his heart, Winthrop Hayes arose, and extending his hand to meet that of a friend, said in a husky voice: "Hilton, I thank you for every word you have spoken to me."

Rushing from the office, he was in the street, hurrying past familiar scenes, and giving hasty recognition to acquaintances and associates, until he entered the building of which he was owner. Never before had it seemed to him so well located, and in every way desirable. It occupied a corner lot; was substantial, and commodious. Moreover, only the day before, a suggestion had been made to him in regard to some improvements, costing comparatively

little, which would greatly increase its value.

Some pleasant rooms in the third story had been recently vacated; and it was to examine these rooms that he mounted the stairs. A hasty survey satisfied him as to their resources. They were thoroughly clean, and could easily be made habitable.

From here, Mr. Hayes went directly to the luxuriously-furnished apartments he had so long considered his home. He gazed around like one in a dream. As he had said, for more than forty-eight hours he had not slept. During the fourteen hours preceding his interview with Horace Hilton, his doors had been locked, while he confronted his past life.

One moment, he despised himself for having allowed Mabel Pease to speak to him as she had done; meanwhile, angry with her for having taken advantage of the opportunity he had given. Then, his whole heart went out to her in passionate yearning for a return of the love which still held its sway.

He wished she was poor; so poor, that she must have assistance, or die. How gladly he would shield her from every sorrow; giving

of his own life even, that hers might be filled with light and happiness. He was fain to believe that, without her, the future could offer no good thing; that all honors would be worthless, and all triumphs empty.

At length pride came to the rescue. He might not win this woman's love; yet he might be worthy of it. He might, at least, command her esteem and confidence. More than this; he might win the respect of all true men and women. This was much.

But the gain involved a fearful struggle. What he had been in the past he must *not* be in the future. What he had not been in the past he *must* be in the future. The work of years was to be undone. The chains of habit must be unbound. Death could hardly be more dreadful than all this riving and sundering of strongly-welded links. Every force of mind and body would be taxed to the utmost; and these forces had never been laid under tribute for such a purpose.

If his old classmate had failed him—and there was more than a possibility of this failure—he would then consider what further should be done. Fortunately, there was no necessity for this consideration. He had only

to prepare himself for the new life which opened before him.

He counted his money in hand, and smiled bitterly, to find that it amounted to less than ten dollars; yet only a few days before, he had been paid hundreds of dollars for rent. He called an auctioneer, and bargained for the sale of his furniture; retaining only such articles as seemed to him indispensable.

He visited his importunate creditor; made a plain statement of facts, and obtained an extension of time for the payment of his debt. Before night, he and his had disappeared from the old quarters.

A family which had long been among his tenants assisted him in his arrangements for housekeeping. He had decided that he could not even afford to board. He must be content with plain fare, and plain surroundings. He had never done things by halves. He would not do them thus now. He could prepare his own coffee, and Mrs. Maitland would cook whatever he desired.

He had been in a delirium of excitement, unconscious of fatigue; but when the day closed, he threw himself into a chair, utterly exhausted. He needed rest and sleep. His

appetite for stimulants craved indulgence. Had wine been placed before him, he might have bartered all for the poisoned draught. Like others, he had often asserted that any man worthy of the name could relinquish any habit when this seemed desirable. But he found to his cost that while this was true, the sacrifice involved was greater than he had anticipated.

He had told the mother of the family from whom he had asked assistance, and upon whom he would depend for needed service, that he was turning over a new leaf, and commencing a reform in his habits. Thus he was fairly committed, while gossip was forestalled.

Compared with many others, he was a generous landlord; and although this was the result of a careless improvidence, rather than any true generosity, his tenants were benefited. Grateful for substantial favors, Mrs. Maitland, to whom reference has been made, was glad of an opportunity to manifest her gratitude. She prepared a dainty, well-served supper, with coffee quite equal to that to which Winthrop Hayes had been accustomed.

"Thank you. I had forgotten that I must have supper," he said, as she placed it upon

the table before him. "In half an hour I shall have done."

"Can I do anything more for you?" asked this humble friend, when she came in at the expiration of the time which had been mentioned.

"Nothing, thank you. Only please have my breakfast in season," he replied. "I have no orders to give, beyond what I told you this afternoon. I cannot afford to live extravagantly."

"But I'm sure you can live comfortably," responded Mrs. Maitland. "It's not much that's needed for that, if you know how to make the most of money."

"I have that to learn. One thing I have already learned; and that is, I have secured the services of an excellent cook. The supper you brought me was perfect."

He did not care to prolong this conversation, and directly he was left alone. At an early hour he lay down to sleep; even then impatient for the morning, which dawned bright with sunshine.

Horace Hilton had not been in his office ten minutes, when Winthrop Hayes appeared, looking worn and haggard. "How are

you?" was asked with a cordial grasp of the hand.

"Well, and ready to work," was the reply.

"You don't look quite up to work, Hayes."

"Perhaps not. The fact is, taking account of such stock as mine is exhausting business. But according to terms of agreement, I have a right to a seat in your office to-day. Have you anything for me to do?"

"I have enough to keep you employed for one day at least. I counted on your help, and business came in wonderfully after you were here." Saying this, Mr. Hilton gave a package of papers to his companion, and explained what he wished to have done.

CHAPTER IX.

LIVING IN A GARRET.

MRS. ARCHER was anxious in regard to her nephew. She had not seen him since the night of the party. Indeed, she had not so much as heard from him, beyond the meagre report made by Mabel Pease. At first, she was inclined to hold this young lady responsible for his absence; but as nothing occurred to confirm her suspicions, she gladly dismissed them.

"Mr. Archer, I wish you would go round to Winthrop's rooms, and see if he is sick," she said on the third day at dinner.

"I was there this morning," was the reply.

"And what account did he give of himself?"

"None whatever. I did not see him. He has left those rooms, and I understood, after-

wards, that he was living somewhere in the third story of his own house."

"For mercy's sake!" exclaimed Mrs. Archer with uplifted hands. "What can have possessed him to do such a thing? He had delightful rooms; elegantly furnished to suit his own fastidious tastes. He must have lost his senses."

"It looks more to me as though he had *found* his senses," said the gentleman. "One of our clerks told me all I know about it. I am going round to see him this evening. It has been a busy day, or I should have gone before now. I have known for some time that Winthrop would be obliged to retrench largely. He has run through most of his property."

Warning looks and gestures were entirely lost upon the speaker; who proceeded in the same strain, until the extravagance and dissipation of Winthrop Hayes had been plainly stated.

"I don't believe one-half you have said," then remarked the lady, whose nephew was under consideration. "I don't doubt it all seems true to you; and by the way you sometimes talk, you must consider hundreds of

young men in this city on the very verge of ruin."

"There *are* hundreds of such young men," said Mr. Archer decidedly. "If I had boys looking to me for an example, not another drop of wine would ever pass my lips."

"*Somebody* may have boys looking to you for an example," now remarked Mabel Pease, who up to this time had been silent. "The evening of the party, Minnie Myers thanked me for refusing to drink wine, and so saving her brother for that one evening. She said Jason was not strong enough to resist temptation; and of course he is tempted, when wine is placed before him."

"So he is, Mabel, and the man who tempts another to sin is guilty. That is the logical conclusion which you omitted."

"Yes, sir, it is."

"Well, Mabel, I wonder what absurd idea will find lodgment in your brain next. I thought its capacity for such tenants was exhausted long ago."

"Oh! no, indeed," replied Mabel, laughing merrily, although she knew that her hostess was seriously displeased. "The older I grow, and the more I know of the world, the more

ideas I must have; and it is not to be expected that they will all seem reasonable to other people. I am not sure they will seem reasonable to myself."

"Well, Mabel, you are the strangest girl! It is well you are not poor, and dependent. Society will excuse any peculiarity in an heiress; and your friends can excuse it in you."

Mrs. Archer's regard for the future prompted this conciliatory remark; but it was easy to see that she would find it difficult to excuse any peculiarity which should conflict with her plans. She observed that her husband did not drink wine as usual, and this annoyed her. Altogether, it was not a thoroughly satisfied group which gathered around the well-spread table.

Dinner ended, Mr. Archer lost no time in carrying into effect his resolution to find Winthrop Hayes. The young gentleman was just sitting down to his solitary repast, when a rap on the door of his upper room demanded attention.

"Mr. Archer!" he exclaimed in a tone of surprise.

"I know I am unexpected; and I may be

unwelcome," was the reply to this salutation.

"You are certainly unexpected. But, on the whole, I am glad to see you; though, to tell the truth, I would as soon your visit had been delayed for an hour. I have been hard at work all day, and somewhere have found an appetite for dinner."

"Hard at work! What do you mean?" asked the visitor, gazing earnestly at the haggard face of his companion.

"For once, I mean what I say. I have been hard at work all day, in Horace Hilton's office, except the time I spent with him at lunch."

"But you look more fit to be on the bed, than at work."

"Perhaps so. But the poor must work. You may remember that you told me, several weeks ago, it was time to turn over a new leaf. Well, I am turning over that leaf. But pray be seated. I would invite you to dine with me, if my accommodations were on a sufficiently extended scale."

"I have dined, thank you, but I will not detain you from your dinner. I have some business to attend to in this part of the city; and

while you are eating I will attend to that. I think it may require about an hour."

An hour passed, and Mr. Archer returned. Having seated himself comfortably, he said: "Now, Winthrop, if you are disposed to tell me how and why all this change was brought about, I shall be glad to hear. I remember having a conversation with you in regard to your prospects; and I have known for a long time that it would be necessary for you to retrench in your style of living. But I never expected anything like this. How came Hilton to think of hunting you up?"

"He didn't think of it. I hunted him up, and asked him to give me work."

Thus Winthrop Hayes answered; and then, with manly frankness, related something of his experience during the days he had not seen this friend.

"And you are in downright earnest," remarked his companion, as he paused for criticism or comment.

"I am," was the reply. "It is now or never with me. Everything or nothing. I have burned my ships, and the enemy is before me. Hilton will stand my friend, and he is a host in himself. But I must fight my own battles.

I have taken no pledges; but when I forfeit the terms of our agreement, I shall leave the office, and make an end of myself."

"And you are to abstain entirely from the use of tobacco, and all kinds of liquor."

"That is the understanding, and—Mr. Archer, do you think it would be a hard thing for you to give up your wine and cigars?"

"I presume it would cost me some self-denial to give them up. I know I *could* do it, though, if I believed that my best good demanded it. I *would* do it at any cost. I would never barter my manhood for such paltry things as liquor and tobacco."

"There are hosts of men doing that every year. Rich men, and poor men; old men, and young men. I am quoting from the sayings of Horace Hilton, Esq., who is doing his best to induce me to endorse the assertion."

"And is there a prospect that he will succeed?"

"There is a *possibility* of such an event. I am making an experiment as well as he. We may both fail."

This was said earnestly, almost sadly; and with no less of earnestness did Mr. Archer respond: "You must not fail. There is no

need of such a calamity. Don't hesitate to call upon me, if I can help you. I will do anything for you which is in my power to do. Your aunt will consider you half insane; but when you have fought the battle, and come home with the spoils, she will be the proudest of all to welcome you. As for Mabel, you have taken the surest way to gain her favor. She has come back to us a very apostle of total abstinence. I am not sure but she preached to you. Did she?"

"Yes, sir, she did; and the sermon was a pointed one from text to conclusion. Now I have told the whole story of my attempted reform, so far as I have gone. I am not in the habit of making personal confessions; but at present I am ignoring all previous habits."

"I did not intend to force your confidence. But you may trust me to guard the secrets of the confessional," replied Mr. Archer. Then, rising to go, he extended his hand, and said with much emotion, "Winthrop Hayes, I have always been interested in you since I first saw you. To-day I respect you as I never respected you before."

Mrs. Archer waited anxiously for her hus-

band's return; and no sooner had he entered the house, than she hastened to meet him. Question succeeded question; the replies eliciting exclamations of astonishment, and sometimes of disgust.

"I never would have believed it of Winthrop," said his aunt, when she comprehended the full extent of his offence. "How could he do such an unheard-of thing? Mabel, don't you think it is scandalous?"

"On the contrary, as the school-girls used to say, I think it is perfectly magnificent."

"I might have known you would say something of that kind," rejoined the lady, whose ideas of propriety had been so scandalized. "I must repeat that you are the strangest girl I have ever known. I shall certainly remonstrate with Winthrop, and endeavor to bring him to his senses. When is he coming here?"

"He did not tell me," replied Mr. Archer. "He is very busy, and seems inclined to attend faithfully to his business."

"Then how am I to see him? I am sure I never can visit him in that garret."

"You would not find him in a garret, wife. His rooms are pleasant, and comfortably fur-

nished. He has retained his books and his finest pictures, and, what will seem best to Mabel, there is no smell of wine or tobacco."

"That *is* best of all," replied the young lady. "If our friend continues as he has commenced, in five years from this time Mrs. Archer will have reason to be proud of her nephew, as a successful lawyer and most honorable man."

Mrs. Archer bowed her acknowledgments; yet she was by no means comforted or conciliated. She could pardon follies and excesses; could find an excuse for many moral delinquencies and irregularities; but to set at defiance the rules of society was an unpardonable sin. It was no exaggeration when she said that she was shocked.

The next morning Winthrop Hayes received from her a characteristic note, abounding in exclamations and interrogations. "There is no reply," he said to the servant in waiting; who, knowing his previous idle habits, wondered at the appliances of work with which he was surrounded.

Mrs. Archer was even more surprised than before. Here was a case of obstinacy for

which she was wholly unprepared. Too proud to consult with others, she again appealed to her husband.

"What can be done?" she asked.

"There is no need of doing anything," he replied. "Winthrop Hayes never needed advice and assistance so little as now. He has started right; and if he keeps on as he has begun, he will show himself a man. You can't wish to have him go back to his old habits and his old quarters."

"I do wish just that," answered the lady quickly. "He was always a gentleman, and his rooms were delightful."

"While his habits were shameful and sinful. You know that as well as I do, call them what names you will. The only wonder is that there was enough of manliness left in him to attempt a reform."

"He could have reformed without doing as he has; though I never believed his habits were very bad."

"You must have known that they were far from good. To put the matter plain—what would you think of Mabel, if her moral character were no better than his? Would you tolerate her under your roof, if she drank

wine until she was in a state of absolute intoxication? I'll not insult her by carrying my comparison further."

"I hope not," said Mrs. Archer, interrupting her husband. "She is a young lady; and we expect a young lady to—to—" The gentleman looked steadily at his wife, until, at last, she abandoned this incomplete sentence, and, starting anew, exclaimed, "Nobody expects a man to be as good as a woman anyway."

"More's the pity. But there is *One* who demands it, and has a right to expect it," he responded gravely.

"Who?"

"The Giver of the Ten Commandments."

"For mercy's sake! are you going to preach a sermon?"

"I feel quite inclined to do so."

"Then I beg of you to call Mabel, and excuse me. My nerves are in no state to bear such an infliction. Winthrop's conduct distresses me, and you give me no comfort. If I could see him, I believe I could influence him; but I never will go to that garret. I wish I knew whether Mabel has anything to do with this freak of his. If I thought she had, I

could never forgive her. If he had only married her, he might have—"

"Spent her fortune and made her miserable. That is what would have resulted from such a marriage. I know you set your heart upon it."

"And you have opposed it," remarked the lady bitterly.

"It has never been necessary for me to oppose it. Mabel is a sensible girl."

This was most unkind of all. Mrs. Archer was wholly disheartened. Despairing of sympathy, she resolved upon silence in regard to her nephew. Only one consolation remained to her. It might be that the conduct she condemned would be the means of effecting the marriage she so earnestly desired.

A month had passed, when she heard a familiar step, and directly a gentleman entered the room in which she was sitting. "Winthrop Hayes!" she exclaimed.

"The very same. Am I welcome?"

"Welcome or not, I am glad to see you. Give an account of yourself. What spirit has possessed you the last four weeks?"

"The spirit of reform," he replied.

"How could you do as you have done,

Winthrop? You know how dear you have been to me since your mother's death, and how much I have expected from you."

The tears which filled her eyes touched the heart of her companion. Under all her worldliness, her devotion to fashion, and her frivolity, there was a sincere affection for her sister's son.

"I think I appreciate your love," he responded gently.

"Then why have you ignored my existence for the last month?" she asked.

"Because it seemed to me best. I had decided upon a course of action from which I knew you would try to dissuade me; and I was not sure enough of myself, to risk an interview with you."

"You knew I would never countenance such insane proceedings. Of course you knew it. Winthrop, I could excuse almost anything else. Do you expect to live in a garret, and still be recognized in society?"

"To tell the truth, I care very little about society just now. I am more anxious to make my way as a lawyer than to shine as a man of fashion."

"But you might attend to your profes-

sion, without making such a spectacle of yourself."

"I might, if I had begun in season. But as I didn't, there was no other way for me than to do as I have done. Nothing would tempt me to go back. So please let us talk no more about it."

At this moment Mr. Archer came in, and gave to the young man a right hearty welcome; adding, "I intended to go round to see you this evening, and I am glad to be saved the trouble."

Mabel, who still remained in the city, was last to meet him; and even to the most observant eyes, there was no betrayal of embarrassment.

Winthrop Hayes no longer affected the listless indifference of one who claims to regard the world as a stage, whose actors are neither responsible nor accountable. He was animated and truthfully earnest. His manners had never been more courteous, or his conversation more entertaining. Moreover, he was faultlessly dressed; and if he lived in a garret, as his aunt was pleased to term the upper apartments he now occupied, he bore no resemblance to such dwellers in general.

There was no wine at dinner, neither was any allusion made to its absence. The hostess seemed ill at ease; but beyond this, there was nothing to mark the changed relations of those who sat at her table. The gentlemen, having matters of business to discuss, retired to the library; and at an early hour, Mr. Hayes took his departure.

"Well, Mabel, how were you pleased with our nephew?" asked Mr. Archer the next morning.

"I thought him very agreeable," was the reply, made in the same light tone used by the questioner.

"So did I. It is too early to speak with authority; but if I am not mistaken, he is bound to rise in the world. He has the right companion in Hilton."

"Who is Hilton?" enquired Mrs. Archer.

"A young man who was in college with Winthrop, and who was admitted to the bar at the same time. He was a good student, and he has been a hard worker in his profession."

"I never heard Winthrop speak of him."

"Probably not. They have seen very little of each other the last five years."

"Then they were not in the same set."

"No. To Hilton's credit, they were not. He has been better employed, than in idling about with a set of dissipated, good-for-nothing fellows."

"I do believe, Mr. Archer, you grow more and more severe every day of your life."

"I know I do, wife. There's enough happening every day to make me so. Only yesterday, I heard a man, who has buried three sons, say that he was thankful they were taken from the world before they learned habits of evil."

"That must have been a weak-minded man."

"No, he is not; or if he is, many are leaning upon a broken reed. I thought he made a strange expression for a father; but an hour after I heard it, I understood why it was. He had just received news of the death of a young cousin, a boy at school, who was shot by a companion. Both had been drinking champagne; and getting into a dispute, ended it with a pistol."

"For mercy's sake! don't tell me such things!" exclaimed Mrs. Archer. "How can you bear to think of them?"

"I am *forced* to think of them, and of their cause. If we could banish intoxicating drink from our land, there would be a heaven upon earth."

"It might be done," now remarked Mabel Pease. "It only needs the united action of all good men and women."

"What have women to do about it? I *do* hope, Mabel, that you're not going to join the strong-minded women, and make yourself—I beg pardon, but I must say it—ridiculous."

"I hope not to make myself ridiculous," was the quiet reply.

"Then what do you intend to do? I really believe that you, and Mr. Archer, and Winthrop are all linked together."

"In a good cause," added the gentleman. "If all women were like Mabel, there would be a sudden reform in the manners of men. Women make the rules of society, and they are responsible for the drinking customs of society. If every woman used her influence in favor of total abstinence, it would soon be so popular that few men would have the hardihood to drink ever so moderately."

"Perhaps you intend to join the ranks of the fanatics?" said Mrs. Archer, striving hard

to maintain the repose of manner upon which she prided herself.

"I do intend it, wife. I am ashamed to be outdone by Winthrop Hayes; and I am too much interested in his welfare not to give him the support of my influence. Should you have thought any better of him, or of me, if we had drunk wine at dinner yesterday?"

"I consider the matter of too small consequence to be discussed," replied the lady coldly. "I hope Winthrop will not utterly ruin his prospects for life; but if he does, the sin will not lie at my door."

CHAPTER X.

A STREET SINGER.

MRS. MAITLAND heard a noise, as of some one falling down the stairs; and hastening to learn the cause, found the motionless form of a girl, who seemed to be not more than ten or twelve years of age. Calling to Mr. Hayes, she stooped to raise the child in her arms.

"Drunk, and I thought she was dead!" said the woman with an expression of disgust. "A girl too. What's to be done with her? She don't belong here."

"Then how came she here, Mrs. Maitland?"

"That's more than I know, sir. I never set eyes on her before. Hadn't you better call a policeman to take her to the station? I don't think she's hurt. She must been stumbling round here, and I thought she

fell down-stairs. She's one of them foreigners, by her looks."

"She is an Italian," replied Mr. Hayes. "Now that the light falls on her face, I recognize it. She goes about with an old man. He grinds a hand-organ, and she sings. She has a sweet voice."

"That may be, sir. But she's nothing to us. Whatever will I do with her? If there's anybody belonging to her, they'll find her at the station."

"Can't you take her to your rooms, Mrs. Maitland? She never seemed to me like other children who sing in the street. I always pitied her. If you will take charge of her for the night, you shall be well paid for your trouble. If she belonged to you or me, we shouldn't want her sent to the station."

"That's true, sir; but such kind is different from us. I don't want pay for doing my duty, til l Iforget what you've done for me."

The next morning Mrs. Maitland made a report of her efforts in behalf of the child thus thrown upon her care.

"Tell me all about her," said Winthrop Hayes.

"That's not much, sir. You'd think she'd been half starved, she's that poor. She just come to in the water, and then she was dead sick. It must been the liquor, and she not used to it. It may be, sir, that you'll understand her; but we can't make out only one word, and that's 'dead.'"

"Perhaps the old man is dead. Poor child!"

"You may well say that. A stone heart would pitied her when I put her in the bed; and she cried without making a sound, till she went to sleep."

"Did you give her something to eat?"

"Yes, sir, a little. She was too hungry to have all she wanted. When she wakes up, I'll feed her. Never you fear for that, Mr. Hayes."

"And then keep her through the day. I will make some enquiries, and see what can be learned about her."

It was in the square, opposite his former rooms, that he had seen the old man and the child, whose sweet voice and beautiful face attracted his attention. Often he would beckon to her to come under his window; and then throw down whatever coins first

came to his hand. Remembering this, he visited the square.

There was the same organ, whose familiar tones he could not fail to recognize. But in place of the well-bred, gentle old man, there was a villanous-looking Italian, whose flashing black eyes and nervous movements revealed his character. Mr. Hayes accosted him, asking for the old man. He feigned not to understand; but the workings of his evil face betrayed him. The question was repeated; and again he muttered under his breath.

A policeman near by was more communicative. "I remember them," he said. "They were different from the rest of their tribe. Guess you've changed your quarters, han't you?"

"Yes, changed the first of May," answered Winthrop Hayes civilly.

"Well, I thought so. The old man han't been round here for two or three weeks, nor the girl either. She was a beauty; and she had a way of singing that made me think of the birds. Guess they missed you. I've seen them watch what used to be your windows, as though they expected something

they didn't get. The last time the old man was here, I remember of thinking he looked paler than general; but I see so many things, they're apt to crowd one another out of my mind."

"There's a villanous wretch with the old man's organ."

"Yes, I keep my eye on him, and now he keeps his eye on us. He could murder anybody that stood in his way, or else his looks don't keep tally with what's inside. I wish I knew something about the old man and the girl. I hope she an't in the power of that villain."

"She is not," was the quick response; and then Mr. Hayes explained the reason of his coming to the square.

It needed only this to secure the co-operation of the officer. He would discover where the old man had found shelter; and he would know, too, about the fellow who had taken his place.

Meanwhile, the child was fast winning her way to Mrs. Maitland's heart. Despite the poverty in which she must have lived, she was cleanly and dainty in her habits. Her knowledge of English was so limited that she could

give no intelligent account of herself; yet, by signs and broken words, she begged not to be sent away; manifesting the utmost terror at the possibility of such an event. When assured that she might remain, she expressed her gratitude with true southern warmth. When left to herself, tears would fill her eyes, and a look of anguish overspread her face; yet she gave no voice to her grief.

During the day Horace Hilton heard of this child, and proposed that his sister should visit her, with a friend who had been much with Italians, and could speak their language.

"What do you intend to do with her?" he asked.

"I don't know," was the reply. "I have only thought of the present and the immediate future. If she has any friends, they must be found. Officer White may make some discoveries which will throw light upon her path."

This officer, stimulated by the fee which had been placed in his hands, lost no time in despatching a faithful deputy to the quarter where the old man was most likely to be known. A long search was made; one after another was interrogated; and still no tidings.

At last a woman was found whose whole appearance contradicted her assertions of ignorance. Subsequent developments proved also that she was really interested in the child, and this, with the promise of a reward, induced her to speak truthfully. She often interrupted her account, to make sure that she was not overheard; and the full meaning of what she said was not always understood; yet enough was learned to answer the purpose of the enquirer.

The old man was dead; and his granddaughter, to whom his death was wholly unexpected, refused to be comforted. No one knew that she had any relative in America, or elsewhere. Her grandfather was not like most of his people who come to this country. He might have been better off some time, and he was a Protestant. He was very careful of Tessa; never allowing her to be away from him; and though they lived under the eaves, their bit of a room was always clean and tidy.

The organ had belonged to the old man. The fellow who now had it in his possession had no right to it. He had offered to take care of Tessa, if she would sing for him. But

she had refused to do this, and he was terribly angry. "He was bad, all bad," the woman said. Tessa had escaped from the house, and no one knew where she had gone.

This was reported to Winthrop Hayes, and corroborated by the child; who, overjoyed at finding one who could understand her, poured out the story of her griefs.

Again she begged not to be sent away. She would do anything, and bear anything, if not obliged to go away The day she was found in the hall, she had been so hungry that she came out from her hiding-place, and asked a girl to give her something to eat. But instead of food, she was offered some "bad drink," which made her sick. She remembered looking up a long flight of stairs, and thinking she should be safe, if she could reach the top. Then all was blank, until a bath had revived her.

"Tell her she shall be taken care of," said Jessie Hilton to the friend who acted as interpreter.

"There are charitable institutions where she would be received," said this friend in reply.

"I know there are, but I hope there is something better for her. Do assure her of protection."

Tessa Gavazzi was ready to worship the beautiful ladies who came to her as angels of mercy; while they, in turn, were ready to vouch for her purity and truthfulness.

Mrs. Maitland, who had a family dependent upon her, was yet willing to keep the child for a small compensation. Mr. Hilton and his sister volunteered to aid in meeting this expense; while Winthrop Hayes was most generous of all.

He lacked the grand benevolence of heart which is capable of great sacrifices; yet the sight of suffering always moved him to kindness. Then, too, Tessa was beautiful; and, moreover, she remembered him gratefully.

Through the efforts of Officer White, she received the old organ and a few other articles to which she attached great value, as having belonged to her grandfather. The Bible had been concealed in a straw mattress, where it served as a pillow for the dying man, who had trusted its promises through a long and eventful life.

It did not require long for Tessa to make

friends with all who dwelt under the same roof with her. Where her beauty failed to accomplish this, her sweet voice and gentle manners won what had been withholden.

"Her musical talent must be cultivated. It will make her fortune," remarked Jessie Hilton one evening, after a call at Mrs. Maitland's. "She is in the wrong place."

"It seems to me that she is in the right place," replied Mr. Hilton, who had listened to a long description of the visit which had so much interested his sister. "Tessa has everything to learn; and it is more important that she should be a good, true woman, than that she should be a prima donna. It will be time to consider that when she is older."

"I know that, Horace. But I never see her without wishing I could take her home."

"Where is home?" asked the gentleman, with a smile which brought blushes to his sister's cheeks. "It is fortunate for me that I am not entirely dependent upon you for help in my profession."

"I suppose it is, Horace. But you know I told you that I would abide by your judgment."

"After everything was settled; and my in-

terference would have been sure to make for me two lifelong enemies. But I'll not tease you, sister mine. Hugh Waters is a noble fellow; one I shall be willing to call brother. His plans interfere with mine. It's the way of the world, and I must submit. To return to your Italian *protégé*. It will be best to leave her where she is until circumstances demand a change. I think that matter can be trusted to Mr. Hayes."

"Of all the world he seems least fitted for the guardian of such a child, Horace. I suppose, however, he has a right to claim the position."

Had Winthrop Hayes heard this, he would have been sure to endorse Miss Hilton's opinion of his unfitness; while a cynical smile would probably have given emphasis to his acknowledgment.

He sometimes fancied himself losing his own identity. He was not the same he had been. His old associates had sought him out; then, wondering at what they saw and heard, left him to his own devices. His aunt had relinquished all hope of seeing him reinstated in his old place in society.

It may be that Horace Hilton was surprised

when each day there came to his office a man who worked industriously at the dullest of all labor. He had not dared to expect this. He was conscious of a feeling of relief at the sight of his companion, whose morning greeting had never failed.

June roses were blooming as he said, "Hayes, when shall you want to take a vacation?"

"Not this year," was the reply. "I have had the vacations of a lifetime in advance. I have neither money to spend nor time to waste."

"But you will need rest."

"When have you rested, Hilton?"

"Oh! sometimes for a day or two. But I am used to hard work. I was brought up to it."

"And I am getting used to it. Are you satisfied with me, Hilton?" A shadow of scorn flitted over the pale face; and there was a half-stifled bitterness in the voice of the speaker.

"I am more than satisfied," was Horace Hilton's reply. "Are you not satisfied with yourself?"

"I could not do better. But it has been a

hard fight, and not yet ended. I am living like a Jew, and working like a slave. That is one side of the shield."

"And the other?"

"May be better seen by you than me. I paid a creditor five hundred dollars yesterday."

"Then you have gained five hundred dollars."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"It was worth working for, Hayes."

"Yes, Hilton, it was. Don't mind my moods. I am having the blues to-day. Do you think I shall ever make a second-rate lawyer?"

"I hope not. Second-rate is poor rate; and in your case there is no need of it. Hard work and total abstinence will carry you higher than that. If you don't care for a vacation, I think I will take one of a week some time this summer, and leave you to manage affairs here in the office. Perhaps I ought to ask you if you are satisfied with your position."

"More satisfied than I should be anywhere else. I can't say that I enjoy total abstinence and hard work. I wouldn't have believed I

was such a slave to appetite and indolence as I find I have been. It is not a flattering estimate of one's self."

Horace Hilton pitied his companion, although he would not have presumed to give expression to his feelings. He could not even extend a helping hand. Here was where no human help would avail. It did not seem best to prolong the conversation, and presently both were engaged in consulting references to decide a point of law.

In the evening Winthrop Hayes was quite too restless to remain in his room, and, not caring to go elsewhere, went to his aunt's. She was suffering with a headache, so that he did not see her; but Mr. Archer welcomed him most cordially.

"How goes the world with you?" asked this gentleman.

"As well as I deserve," was replied.

"And that, I think, is very well just now, Winthrop. I am getting proud of you, and I am glad you came round this evening. Mabel has gone, and the house seems lonely."

"I thought she was to leave in May."

"That was her intention. But there was business to be attended to; and we hardly

realized how fast time was passing. I hope we shall have her back before winter."

"Her admirers and friends will all hope so; I with others. Have you made a trial of abstinence yet?"

"Yes."

"Banished cigars with the wine?"

"Yes. Made a clean sweep; so there's not a smell of forbidden things in the house."

"And do you enjoy the change?"

"Can't say that I do. But I believe it is the right thing, though I don't quite see the need of my giving up cigars. A cigar once in a while wouldn't hurt me."

"Neither would a glass of wine."

"I don't think it would, Winthrop."

"You can speak for yourself decidedly, Mr. Archer. An occasional glass of wine will never injure such a man as you are. The trouble is that very few men are like you. The majority of men will drink *more* than one glass."

"That is true, Winthrop. Many men, too, make a business of dissipation. You remember I have told you before that unless a man can drink *very* moderately, he ought not to drink at all. I know that I am sure of my-

self as any one can be; yet I think best not to drink at all. *You* think best not to drink at all, Winthrop?"

"I do. I shall try total abstinence for a year, and then calculate the results."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHOICE.

WHEN Mabel Pease found herself again at Mr. Bedlow's, it seemed strange to her that she had remained so long away. The air was laden with the perfume of flowers and the song of birds. The richest verdure covered hills and valleys. All nature rejoiced, as the sunlight flooded the earth and waked each living thing to gladness.

"There is nothing more to be desired, now you have come," said Raleigh Bedlow, as he stood by his cousin, watching the fading sunset. "Aunt Jane was almost happy when I told her you were here."

"I wish she could be quite happy."

"I wish so too. But I suppose she must think of that wicked man who was once her husband. I know John thinks of him."

"Is John as strong as he was last winter?"

"Not yet; though the doctor says he will

be. He begins to help me some. But farming isn't his work. He wants to be a merchant. Last week he had a letter from one of his uncles, who offered to adopt him, and give him a good start in the world."

"Will John accept the offer?"

"Not he. He says he belongs to his mother, and he shall stay with her, if he has to live on a crust of bread."

"There is no danger of that."

"Not a bit of it. The old farm is going to make good profits this year; and then Aunt Jane will earn lots of money for herself. Everybody comes to her to have their dresses fitted and bonnets trimmed."

In saying this, Raleigh did not so much exaggerate. People were curious to see Mrs. Warland, and so readily found an excuse for visiting her. There was much of kindness, too, mingled with this feeling. Mr. Bedlow's family had always been respected, and now, in the trial which had come to them, they received the sympathy of their neighbors.

Mrs. Warland was cordial, and ready to receive suggestions in regard to her work; but any attempt to intrude upon her private

griefs was repelled with dignity. Even with her father, who visited her with the regularity of the sun, she never referred to her married life.

"I'm thankful you've come to us again," the old man said to Mabel Pease the morning after her arrival. "You'll do more for Jane than any of the rest of us can. I don't feel quite easy about John. He's a good boy, but he an't like Raleigh. It's likely he's got some notions like his father, and he don't want to work on a farm. He don't say anything about it, but I can see how he feels. He'd rather go into a store; and his uncles are trying to get him away from his mother."

"But he will never leave his mother. He loves her too well for that."

"I know he says so, and I've no doubt he means it. He's had a hard time lately, and it's made him think. But I'm afraid of what's coming. The Warlands won't be likely to give up sending for him. They must have seen or heard from his father, though they don't say so; and that's the way they know where to write to John. He is the only boy in the family, and they

are anxious to have him to themselves. I wish you'd talk with him."

"I will," was responded cheerfully; and before the freshness of the morning had passed, she went to visit Jane Warland.

Affectionate greetings were followed by many interested enquiries from both hostess and guest.

"How pleasant and cozy you look here. I didn't know this little cottage had such capabilities," remarked the latter.

"I think it is pleasant," was the reply. "I always liked the old house. Raleigh and John have made some improvements this spring. Raleigh has his father's gift for doing all kinds of work. I wish John was more like him."

"I think John is very well in his own character. I know that Raleigh considers him superior in many things. There is a place for him, and he will find it in the right time."

"I hope so. But the Warlands are determined to take him from me; and I have been so often deceived and disappointed that I hardly dare feel sure of anything. I presume father has told you. I can't talk with him

about it, but it is a relief to speak of it to you."

"Then do so," replied Mabel. "But don't feel anxious. Aunt Martha used to say that half our trouble was borrowed, and the other half doubled by trying to live in the future. You are sure of the present. Leave the future with God."

It was not necessary to seek an opportunity for talking with John Warland in regard to his father's relatives. Within a week he received another letter from his uncle, and, having taken it from the office himself, wished to consult some one before submitting it to his mother.

"What shall I say?" he asked when the letter had been read by his cousin.

"What do you wish to say?" was asked in reply.

"That I will not leave my mother. That my father has no control over me or claims upon me. Uncle John thinks he can buy me from my father, or something of that kind. He don't know about the divorce. Mother didn't want me to tell him. But you see there'll be letters coming all the time, unless I do tell him. I thought you'd know what I

ought to do," added John with the utmost sincerity and confidence.

"Would you like to go to your uncle's?"

"Not to leave my mother," was the quick reply. "I don't think I'd go there to live anyway," he continued after a short silence. "But it's beautiful there, and I used to be very fond of my cousins. Uncle John lives as I can remember we used to live; only he is richer than ever father was. Then there is Aunt Ermengarde, who lives with him. She is the richest of all. You see there is a message from her in this letter."

"And you might be rich, if you would go. Aunt Ermengarde might make you her heir."

This was said to test the boy, and it effected its purpose. His face flushed and his eyes flashed. But only for a moment, when he answered frankly, "Cousin Mabel, I should like to live in such a house as Uncle John does. I should like money; but I want to make it for myself. Two months ago it seemed to me that I should be perfectly happy, if I could stay here, and never feel afraid of father again. But I can't stay here always. I must go somewhere, where I can support myself, and my mother too."

"Are you willing to stay here for a year?" asked Mabel.

"Of course I am. Don't think me the most unreasonable boy in the world, because I can't feel just as other boys do. Before we came here, I used to lie awake nights sometimes, calculating how I could earn ten cents the next day; and I guess that is the reason I feel so old."

"Perhaps it is," was replied tenderly. "I don't think you unreasonable; but I do think that the sooner you show your mother this letter, the better it will be for you both. If you have cast in your lot with hers—"

"My lot was always with hers, and always will be," exclaimed the boy impetuously. "My father's relatives, with all their money, aren't half so good as my mother's. I don't believe there's a Warland in the world that can compare with Grandfather Bedlow; and as for Raleigh, there is only me to stand beside him."

Mrs. Warland no longer objected to having her divorce from her husband made known to his friends. She knew they would be fearfully angry, and blame her unsparingly. Aunt Ermengarde, whose pride of family held every

other sentiment and emotion in abeyance, would be most severe in her condemnation of the disgraceful act. Her riches made her an oracle; and, once offended, she was never known to forgive.

John lost no time in announcing his position and determination in a manly, courteous way; also expressing his gratitude for the kindness he could not accept.

One more letter closed the correspondence. He to whom it was addressed was formally disowned, and commanded never to presume upon the friendship of any one bearing his name. "They will come to me before I shall go to them," he remarked, as he laid the letter upon the table by which his mother was sitting.

She read it without making any comments, save by the mute appeal which could be seen in her eyes; and to which her son responded by a caress.

There had been no waiting of summer days for this final decision; no idling on the part of him whose welfare was thus considered. The boy was constantly gaining strength and courage; applying himself to work with cheerful energy. Dr. Saunders had a watchful eye

upon him; speaking now and then an approving word; and sometimes cautioning him against too lavish an outlay of strength. He was ambitious to keep pace with Raleigh, who seemed never to tire or grow weary.

Yet from each day some time was devoted to reading and recreation; so relieving the tedium of work, which under other circumstances might become mere drudgery. How this was effected perhaps only Mabel Pease could tell. Certain it is that she seemed the animating spirit of the house. When there came a week of comparative leisure, she invited Jenny, Raleigh, and John to go to the seaside with her; she paying all expenses, both of the journey and the preparations.

Some objections were made to these conditions; but they were at length accepted with the invitation, and there was not a party of travellers that summer who more enjoyed their journey. Mabel had no reason to blush for her companions. Their faces and hands were browned by exposure to the sun; but their manners were unexceptionable.

As none of them cared to meet the fashionable crowd, a quiet boarding-place had been secured in a retired spot; where bold,

rocky bluffs alternated with level stretches of sandy beach; thus giving to the landscape a peculiarly wild and picturesque charm. Here some new phase of beauty or of grandeur was revealed with every passing hour. Then, too, turning from more magnificent exhibitions of nature's wonders, there were crannies and pools of water to be explored.

The week was all too short for seeing and hearing. Yet in their long walks they made the acquaintance of some fishermen, who were more than willing to talk of the perils of the sea, as these had been encountered just outside the rocks, towards which they pointed with many an ominous gesture. Thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes were related with an eloquence from which no rudeness of language could detract.

But our party were not the only visitors to this wild retreat. There were others listening to the same music of the waves; and noting the same play of light and shade. Men and women, tired of work and the struggle for daily bread, had stolen a few days for rest; and, leaving care behind them, come here to be refreshed.

The morning Mabel Pease and her cousins had intended to leave, a new arrival was expected to take possession of the rooms thus to be vacated. The previous day a storm had prevented an excursion which promised rare pleasure; and although the disappointment was partly compensated by its cause, it seemed desirable to carry out the original plan. After some consultation, Mabel decided to remain; trusting to the good-nature of the expected party to excuse a temporary want of accommodations. "I will be surety for them on that score," said an elderly man. "I know Hilton well enough to know he will never complain without cause. All sensible people can make the best of things; and only sensible people would come here any way. If they get here early, as they ought to, we can invite them to go with us, and that will settle the whole matter."

The party arrived. The situation was explained, and accepted without a murmur. Introductions were given; followed by cordial invitations to join the excursionists, which invitations were cordially welcomed.

They were hardly strangers when they met. When they parted, they were friends.

Mabel Pease was not long in discovering that the Mr. Hilton whom she found so agreeable was the lawyer in whose office Winthrop Hayes was employed; while he knew, when her name was first mentioned, that she was Mr. Archer's ward. His sister and her *fiancé*, with a young cousin, had accompanied him; all intent upon making the most of every enjoyment which came in their way.

"I wish they had come sooner, or else we could stay longer," whispered Jenny Bedlow to her brother.

"But we have had our vacation, and must go back to work," was the reply.

"I know that, Raleigh, and I guess I should like to see all the folks at home. But if I were Cousin Mabel, I'd just stay ever so long."

Cousin Mabel did not take this view of the case. She was free to do as she pleased, and she pleased to return to Mr. Bedlow's.

Not much had happened during their absence; yet they were eager to hear every detail of the home life. Aunt Jane had

abandoned her cottage for the time, and Grandfather Bedlow had assumed the care of the farm. Everything had prospered; and there was not a regret to mar the pleasure of their holiday.

"I know you all enjoyed it. I can tell that by your looks," said the old man.

"We couldn't help enjoying it," answered Jenny. "We just had all the things to make us happy. I hope Cousin Mabel enjoyed it as much as the rest of us did."

"She certainly did," responded this young lady.

"I thought there might be one blot on the picture I brought back with me; but, happily, there is not."

"I know what would have made the blot, Cousin Mabel. The wine Mr. Muzzey had. If all that had been emptied out of the bottles, there would have been a big blot. But I don't believe there was a single bottle opened. Mr. Muzzey said you were the most eloquent temperance lecturer he ever heard speak on the subject."

"Why, Jenny!"

"Well, you know he did say so. Was it wrong for me to tell of it?"

"You have done nothing wrong, dear; only the flattery was extravagant. I only said I should not taste of the wine; and then, when he asked me some questions, answered them frankly. I did not lecture at all."

"But Mr. Hilton did that last day, didn't he?"

"I think he did, Jenny."

"Raleigh said it was grand to hear him talk; and John said he wished everybody felt the same."

Often had John Warland wished that all the world was enlisted in the cause of total abstinence, that in years to come no one would tempt him to ruin. He began to see his danger, and realize the curse which rested upon him. He must resist even unto death; and yet there was the possibility of failure. Others had looked forward to life with the same resolves and the same vague fears; the latter, alas! sadly realized.

Other questions pressed upon him. How could he take the first steps towards the success he coveted? He was a studious scholar; but he had studied that he might make his knowledge available. Thrown upon his own

resources, as he had been, he was shrewd in calculation far beyond his years. His mother was always his confidant; yet he had originated his own plans for earning money, and carried them into execution by efforts in which she could not aid him.

His naturally fastidious tastes, and the really high-toned principles which were pressed upon him as a rule of conduct, were sufficient guarantee against his acquiring the habits of those with whom his poverty brought him in contact. *His* hour would come when surrounded with elegance and luxury; when the poisoned chalice would be wreathed with flowers, and the smile of beauty charm him to a forgetfulness of danger.

His grandfather judged him rightly; and while regarding him with the most sincere affection, scarcely dared to hope that his character would stand the test to which it must be subjected.

"I think you are over-anxious," said good Dr. Saunders, to whom the old man was wont to confide his troubles. "I know, as we say, that the chances are against him; but he has had some hard lessons, and I believe he has profited by them. He understands what his

besetting sin will be, and he feels his dependence upon God. Perhaps not as you and I do ; but in a way which will make him distrust himself and his own strength. He is conscientious and truthful. Then he has a good mother, who is quick to see his faults, and wise to restrain him. Her love for him and his love for her are his great safeguards. I wish he took to farming. But he don't ; and it's of no use to talk of that. If you can keep him here for a year or two, he must go then to act for himself ; and never fear, friend Bedlow, but the Lord will have him in remembrance."

CHAPTER XII.

THE WARNING.

IT was at Mrs. Warland's suggestion that in the autumn Raleigh Bedlow left home to attend school; while the work usually devolving upon him during the winter months was assumed by his cousin.

Before divulging her plan, his aunt had so well matured its details that she was fully prepared to meet every objection which might be offered. She knew the house would be lonely, and that her son could never fill Raleigh's place. She knew her father would sorely miss the boy who had always stood at his right hand; and whose absence would take much from the cheerful home life of the family. Yet she insisted that the ultimate gain would more than compensate for the present loss; and at length she had the satisfaction of knowing that her object was accomplished.

Mabel Pease was to spend the winter with some relatives, whose acquaintance she had recently made; so that she could not be depended upon to supply the gladness which might otherwise be missed. But there was Jenny, brave, helpful child; forcing back the tears which would come at the thought of being separated from her brother, and assuring Aunt Jane that she could do almost everything herself.

"I know just how Raleigh does, and I'm ever so glad he can go to school. Cousin John is almost as good; and Nelly and I are going to make believe he's our brother. If Cousin Mabel were here, we shouldn't mind so much. But we can't have her always."

"Why not?" asked Nelly, who, contrary to her usual custom, was inclined to question her sister's conclusion.

"Because she don't really belong here. And if she did, it's likely some gentleman would marry her, and take her away."

"Do you think all that's just true, mother?"

"I think it is," answered Mrs. Bedlow, caressing the child who thus appealed to

her. "We can't expect to have Cousin Mabel always; and this winter we must make ourselves happy with each other."

"And the long, long letters," added Jenny.

These letters, which never failed to make their appearance on the appointed day, did much to reconcile the friends of the writer to his absence. They were entertaining records of school duties and pleasures; with many a loving message to the dear ones at home.

"I am thankful for this taste of learning; most of all, because it shows me what I *might* do," he wrote to his mother. "Tell Aunt Jane she will never know how much she has done for me in sending me here."

"I hope the boy won't be discontented with the old farm," remarked Mr. Bedlow, with a half-audible sigh, when he fully comprehended the meaning of the words he had heard.

"He won't be, father. I can answer for that. You know he says he shall come back to his work cheerfully."

"Yes, I know that. But there's some-

thing back of it. His father might have been a scholar; and perhaps we ought to let the boy give up farming; though I don't know. I don't know."

"*He* knows all about it," said Jenny comfortingly. "You wait till he comes, grandfather, and he'll tell you."

A bounding step; a ringing voice subdued to gentlest tones; the warm grasp of a strong, firm hand—all these announced the home-coming of Raleigh Bedlow. The very same open brow, sunny smile, and frank expression; yet the face had undergone a subtle change which words can hardly describe. All did not see it, but some there were who recognized it at a glance.

"Did you want to come back?" asked his cousin, looking at him earnestly.

"Of course I did," was the unhesitating reply.

"And you are willing to work here all your life?"

"I am willing to do my duty, and my duty is here."

"But wouldn't you rather study than plant potatoes and hoe corn?"

"Yes, if it was all the same to grandfather,

mother, and the girls. To be sure I should; but I must think of others. I thank you for having taken my place so long. It was more than I expected."

"Why was it, Raleigh? I don't know why I shouldn't work as well as you. Grandfather has as strong a claim upon me as he has upon you."

"Well, yes, John, I think he has; but my mother and sisters belong to me exclusively. You wouldn't be satisfied to stay here and work as I expect to."

"The work won't satisfy you either, Raleigh. You aren't the same you were the first time I saw you. You think about different things, and you mean to know more than the farmers about here."

"I mean to know all I can; but I expect to be a farmer for all that—hard-working and money-earning. I got some new ideas while I was away, and there are more to be had for a price."

"What price?"

"Hard study. I hope there'll be a way for you, John. I know you can't stay here always; but it's a safe place for us both."

"And I need that kind of a place. Do you

believe I shall ever be such a man as—as—Do you believe I shall ever be a drunkard, Raleigh?"

"Believe it? No!" was replied indignantly. "What made you think of it?"

"Something I have read, and some other things that I know. Do you think you could take a glass of wine, and drink half of it, and then set the rest down?"

"Do I think I could? Why, you know I wouldn't *touch* the stuff any way."

"Yes, I know; but *could* you do it, if you should try?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Well, Raleigh, I'm afraid I couldn't; and that troubles me. I've been reading about a young man who was something like what I shall be."

"How do you know what you shall be, unless you have made up your mind?"

"I *don't* know," said John deprecatingly. "I only think."

"Well, I think you can be what you determine to be; but I don't understand what you mean by all this talk. What is it?"

For reply, another question was asked: "Have you ever read that when a man is in-

sane, his children, if he has any, are likely to be insane?"

"Yes, I have," replied Raleigh, now comprehending all that his cousin shrank from saying. "But your father was not insane. He acted with his own free will, and so can you. If you are like him, you will be responsible for it yourself."

"But, Raleigh, you don't know."

"Don't know? It seems to me I know something about you, John. You can't be such a weak, miserable fellow as you're trying to make out. Let me see what you've been reading. John Warland, I've always thought you were a great deal better than I am. I shouldn't have done half so well as you have, if I had been in your place. I *did* think you were a Christian."

"You have judged me kindly; but I've not been really tried yet. Only those who overcome have a right to be called Christians. You might have done a great deal better than I have; though it's been hard for me to do as well as I have. I'm glad I can talk just what I feel to you. I can't say anything to mother or grandfather; and Cousin Mabel isn't here; so I've had to keep it all to myself."

"You may talk to me just as much as you want to; but if I have guessed the secret of your trouble, Dr. Saunders would know best what to tell you."

"It was Dr. Saunders that gave me the story; and I suppose he thought I needed to read it. I want you to read it too, and then tell me what you think."

A year before, Raleigh Bedlow would have met his cousin's questions and fears with something like ridicule; but, wiser now than then, he knew they were not thus to be set aside. After reading the story to which reference has been made, he did not wonder at the impression it had produced.

It was the work of a master's hand; portraying with startling vividness the downward career of a young man who, until he had attained the age of twenty-five years, was considered above reproach. His father had gone down to a drunkard's grave; yet his personal merits were such, that this fact was wholly disregarded by the community in which he dwelt. His brilliant talents, agreeable manners, and high sense of honor made him a universal favorite; moreover, he seemed to possess the

crowning glory of manhood. He was an exemplary member of a Christian church.

But in an evil hour he put the wine-cup to his lips. Then the appetite, so long dormant, asserted its fearful power. Like a demon, exulting in its strength, it hurled its victim from his high estate, and plunged him into the fathomless abyss of shame and ruin. Again and again did he struggle to escape; but the chain that bound him was an inheritance which, by a single thoughtless act, he had accepted, and from which he could no more be free.

Bearing the impress of truth, Dr. Saunders had read this story with a quickened sense of the wrong done to future generations; and thinking it might benefit John Warland, had given it to him for perusal. The good man had not calculated upon its possible effect. He thought only that it might serve as a warning.

Not long after Raleigh's return, he met the doctor; and in their familiar conversation, reference was made to the narrative and the morbid feeling it had induced.

"Well, well, that shows what blundering creatures we are," was the response. "I

wanted to do some good, and, instead of that, I have done hurt. Now I must try and undo it. I'll manage to see John before long, and have a talk with him."

CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW HOME.

AGAIN Mrs. Archer uttered her favorite exclamation of surprise. Again she wondered what would happen next.

"To think of Mabel Pease setting up an establishment for herself; as though she were forty, and had given up all hope of ever being married. The most absurd thing! Quite equal to Winthrop's living in a garret."

"If it proves half so wise as that, all sensible people will have reason to rejoice. I *did* hope, wife, that your prejudice against Winthrop's reform had died out. You know, or you *might* know, that he never stood so well in the community before as he does now. He is making an honorable name. Those who ridiculed him at first praise him now."

"He might have done as well, and retained his old suite of rooms. I shall never have faith in any such out-of-the-way conduct.

But I am tired of talking about it. Winthrop must take care of himself, and be responsible for his own actions. Mabel's project troubles me now. I should remonstrate, if there was a shadow of reason for me to expect to have any influence. I invited her to stay with us, as she did when she was your ward; and I am sure she had no reason to complain of a want of kindness on my part."

"I don't think she has ever complained of you," replied Mr. Archer. "But I suppose it is quite natural that she should want a home of her own."

"Then why doesn't she marry, as any sensible girl would? She has had a great deal of attention from gentlemen; and I don't doubt that she has had several offers of marriage; though I am not in her confidence. If she were my daughter, she would do very different from what she has done. I don't suppose she would marry the best man in the world, if he drank a glass of wine with his dinner."

"I don't suppose she would marry any man who had not a principle against drinking wine; and, to tell the truth, I am beginning to wonder that any woman dares to risk her happiness with a wine-drinker."

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Archer! What would you have? Have nine out of every ten women live old maids, and go to housekeeping like Mabel Hayes?"

"Yes, rather than marry men who are likely to become drunkards. I should be glad if Mabel were disposed to make her home with us. But she prefers an independent establishment, as she certainly has a right to. She has property enough to live comfortably, and she will make the most of it. If nine out of every ten women could keep house as pleasantly as she will, they would be far better off than they are now. Then she has another object besides her own enjoyment. She told you of young Warland?"

"Yes. But I don't see why she need trouble herself about him. She is too young to set up for a philanthropist."

Mr. Archer had no more to say in justification of an act which justified itself; and which neither he nor his wife had a right to criticise. Up to this time, Mrs. Archer had hoped that her nephew would eventually marry Mabel Pease; and the fact that his recent course was calculated to raise him in the estimation of the young lady had been her

only solace. The proposed arrangement she so condemned destroyed all hope of this marriage.

For all this, Mabel Pease purchased a house, furnished it handsomely, and took possession; with Mrs. Warland as superintendent in whatever departments her own ability might prove insufficient. As a matter of course, John came with his mother; or perhaps I should say that she came with him. Only his welfare would have induced her to leave her father and the quiet of her little cottage.

Through the influence of Cousin Mabel, a situation had been offered him in Mr. Archer's store; and as no part of his history had been concealed, whatever of disgrace attached to his name was known at once. After the first few days, during which he was learning his new duties and accustoming himself to his new surroundings, he felt that he was in the right place.

His mother, too, was in a position which befitted her. Although paid a stipulated sum for service rendered, she was the companion of one who regarded her in no way inferior. Mrs. Archer might sneer, as

she certainly would; yet even she could not meet Mrs. Warland without recognizing the ease and elegance of one accustomed to refined society.

Grandfather Bedlow listened to descriptions of this home; sometimes with frankly-expressed satisfaction, and sometimes with ominous forebodings. "Everything seems all right," he once remarked half doubtingly.

"It *is* all right," answered Raleigh heartily. "It is pretty lonesome here sometimes, but we are getting used to that. We couldn't expect to have Aunt Jane and Cousin John here always, any more than we could to have Cousin Mabel. I'm glad John has found somebody to help him on in the world. We have our place here, and we'll keep it as bright as we can. They will come to see us, and think how pleasant it is to get away from the city for a little while."

"Yes, my boy, I know that. I try to remember that I can't keep the young folks with me always, and I know John must go away some time. When you've seen him in the city, perhaps you'll want to go too."

"Not while you are here, grandfather. I expect to be a farmer, and I calculate to be a happy one. The farm is gaining. It did better last year than it has before."

"Yes, my boy, I know it, and I ought to be thankful for my blessings, without worrying about what's coming in the future. Give my love to John, and tell him I pray for him."

John did not need to be reassured of this; yet as he read the message, his heart beat quicker, while involuntarily his thoughts assumed the form of prayer. His home influences were calculated to foster and develop whatever was noble in his character. Faithful to his employer, he devoted his leisure time to the acquisition of knowledge which might be of use to him as he advanced.

An experience of six months proved the wisdom of Mabel Pease in providing herself with a home, where she might live as accorded with her own ideas of home life. Here, too, she welcomed the friends whose society she prized, entertaining them as cordially as she did unostentatiously.

She knew at the outset that she could afford no extravagant expenditure; that she could not vie with those whose yearly income

equalled or exceeded her whole property. She did not weary herself with efforts to outshine others, or gain a position which was not freely accorded. She had too many resources of happiness within herself to care for such distinction; and now that she found herself at perfect liberty to do what seemed to her good, she felt the influence of her early training. The homely ways of Aunt Martha had for her a peculiar charm. Two rooms of her house were furnished as other two had been in her childhood's home. In them was not an article which had not been hallowed by the touch of loving hands.

Winthrop Hayes had been one of the first to congratulate her upon her independence; and, as time went on, he occasionally spent an evening where he was sure of a cordial reception and pleasant companionship. Mrs. Warland interested him scarcely less than did her friend, whose duties as hostess she shared. Everything here was so real and genuine that, having thrown aside his artificial manners, he experienced a sense of relief so soon as he crossed the threshold.

These visits seemed to corroborate the report that the sudden change in his habits was in

some way connected with Mabel Pease. Gaining completeness and distinctness, perhaps by repetition, it was afterwards said he had been put on probation, and that the event of their marriage depended upon his habits.

It may be that Mrs. Archer was responsible for this gossip. Certain it is that she never denied it; while those most interested knew nothing of its existence. If Winthrop Hayes hoped now to win the love once denied him, he made no sign. If Mabel remembered the passionate declaration to which she had once listened, she betrayed this memory by neither word nor look.

He was not now a society man. He had seldom appeared at any fashionable entertainment since he assumed the rôle of a hard-working lawyer, in which capacity he had shown himself worthy of commendation. They who had doubted his energy and perseverance found themselves compelled to yield their prejudices. Horace Hilton, who had at first trusted him only so far as was necessary to give him a fair trial, gradually gave to him an almost unlimited confidence.

He was independent. His smaller debts were cancelled, and the claims of the once

importunate creditor so nearly satisfied that they occasioned no anxiety.

He was improving in every way. His words were truthful expressions of his sentiments; his purposes honest and honorable.

Among the influences which had wrought this change, not the least was his interest in Tessa, the child who still found a home with Mrs. Maitland. He did not often see her; but he knew that her voice had lost nothing of its sweetness. Neither had she lost one of the friends won by her helplessness and personal attractions. On the contrary, she had gained many who were ready to assist her.

Jessie Hilton, now Mrs. Waters, would have urged her adoption into some wealthy family had not others decidedly objected. "Mr. Hayes, what do you think should be done for your *protégé?*" asked this lady after a visit to the child.

"I don't know," he replied. "She promises to be a beauty, and her talent deserves cultivation. Of these two things I am sure. Beyond that I am entirely ignorant."

"She could make her fortune as a singer."

"There is little doubt of that, Mrs. Wa-

ters, and I suppose that is her destiny. If you and Miss Pease will decide what is best to be done for her, I will second your plans, and contribute accordingly. We shall soon have a young lady on our hands, and it would be poor charity to leave her in ignorance."

As near as could be ascertained, Tessa was fourteen years of age; older than many who consider themselves young ladies; and knowing more of the hardships of poverty than most people are ever forced to learn.

A change of place for her had often been discussed; but it was not until Mabel Pease wished to assist a friend, who was preparing to open a boarding-school for young girls, that any definite decision was reached. This friend, Miss Dennen, resided with her mother in a pleasant and commodious house, which was their only possession; and it was the desire to make this available which prompted them to try the experiment of receiving a limited number of pupils. The daughter was fully qualified for the position she proposed to assume; needing only a generous patronage to ensure complete success.

To Miss Pease it seemed a providential

opening for Tessa; and obtaining the consent of all interested, she lost no time in making the necessary arrangements. She even went herself to introduce the child, and bespeak especial kindness for a stranger in a strange land.

Of course Mr. Hayes must receive a report of this visit. During the conversation between Miss Pease and himself, the former remarked: "When Miss Dennen was in school, there seemed no probability that she would ever be obliged to earn her own living. Her father was considered a wealthy man, and up to the time of his death they lived in corresponding style."

"People are often deceived in regard to their own circumstances," was the reply. "There is no good reason why they should be so deceived; but, speaking from experience, I believe there is nothing harder for a man who is losing ground than an honest examination of his affairs, especially if he knows himself to blame for his want of prosperity."

"I presume you are right, Mr. Hayes. I have sometimes thought that we fear ourselves more than we fear the world. If people who are going wrong could be made to pause, and

see themselves as they really are, with the danger to which they are exposed, I believe they would reform."

"They would in most instances. There is no doubt of that. But they will not pause. Therefore they do not see. For ten years I never once fairly confronted myself. Whenever serious thoughts intruded, I crushed them or drowned them, as the case might be. I stifled my conscience; though men living as I did affect a disbelief in this old-fashioned monitor."

"Affectation is not reality, and, if it were, no disbelief, however positive, can annihilate an attribute which God has given. I am so old-fashioned that I accept old-fashioned truths without a question."

"I know you do. In that respect you are the same as when I first challenged you to discussions of abstract and sometimes absurd theories."

"Those discussions were very tiresome to me. I wondered then, as I do now, how any sensible man could talk as you did. Excuse me, but I am accustomed to speak the truth," added Mabel with a smile.

"There is nothing to excuse. I need to hear

the truth. Perhaps my practice then may aid me to make a more specious plea for a client whom I know to be the guilty party. Aside from that, it was utterly senseless."

It must be that Winthrop Hayes was in a moralizing mood. From the house of Miss Pease he went directly to Mr. Archer's, where he found the gentleman alone in his library.

"Good-evening. Glad to see you. Sit down, and tell me how you are prospering," was said cordially. "Heard a man say today that Hilton must look to his laurels, or you would take them from him."

"That is all nonsense," was the reply. "Hilton is worth two of me. He is as steady in his habits and thoughts as the sun in its rising and setting. If he ever has an attack of the blues, it is when he is out of sight. He was building himself up while I was tearing myself down; and that makes all the difference in the world. He has all the past for a rear guard, while I have a host of enemies behind me always ready for an assault. As if I could take his laurels! If I ever win any of my own, it will be more than I deserve."

"Come, come, Winthrop, that is no way

for a man to talk. Let the past go, and make the most of the future."

"The past will not be let go. That is the trouble. It holds me. Mr. Archer, did you ever feel that there would be for you a savage delight in plunging into some excess which would make you forget everything before it or after it?"

"No, Winthrop, I never did, and I don't think I can quite understand such an unnatural state of mind."

"That is just the horror of it. It *is* unnatural. I don't suppose any one can understand it, unless he has perverted his entire nature."

Just here the old mocking spirit, not yet wholly exorcised, prompted bitter, sneering words, which would have swept away, as with a breath, the impression made by these last remarks. The evil prompting was resisted; yet across the face of him thus tempted there flitted a shadow, which a watchful eye observed.

"Don't be too hard on yourself," said Mr. Archer.

"I am not," was the reply. "Humility was never one of my virtues. But I am an

infliction this evening. My own room will be the best place for me."

With this Winthrop Hayes rose to leave; when his host detained him, saying, "I received a letter to-day in regard to young Warland; and before I reply, I want somebody's advice. I suppose I should consider the letter confidential; but I intended to consult you or Mabel, and, as you are here, it may as well be you. Read the letter, and tell me what you think of it."

CHAPTER XIV.

A WIDOWED BRIDE.

"THERE'S a suspicious-looking character in a corner of the rear car. Has his ticket all right for the through train; but looks as though he might be anything from a murderer to a sneak thief. You'll know him the minute you set your eyes on him. Keep a sharp lookout."

This was said by one conductor to another who was about to take his place. There was time for nothing further. The cry, "All aboard," quickened the steps of laggards; and hundreds of travellers looked forward to the end of their journey with eager impatience. There were men of business, and men of leisure; plainly-dressed women in the maturity of life, and young girls to whom life was as yet but a dream of gladness. Some, too, there were way-worn and weary, sorrow-stricken and alone.

But of all, the man to whom attention had been called was most abject in appearance. He shrank from observation, yet seemed to feel that every eye was upon him. If he raised his head for a furtive glance around him, he lowered it again with a startled look, as though some fearful sight had confronted him.

The conductor regarded him curiously; noting the contour of his face, with the form and size of his hands; both of which indicated a type of ruffian—if this he was—distinct from the common crowd of offenders. The semblance of poverty might be a disguise; yet there was no mistaking the wretchedness stamped upon every feature of the haggard countenance.

As the train neared its final stopping-place, satchels, valises, and extra wraps were gathered together, that they might be in readiness for their owners. But the suspected man had not so much as a parcel. Jostled by others, as they rushed forward to leave the car, he returned to his corner until the passage was cleared. Then with faltering tread he descended the steps, and slunk away.

Clutching the small amount of money in his possession, his first impulse was to purchase with it a temporary forgetfulness. He even paused at the door of a filthy saloon, and might have entered, had not some man pushed him from the sidewalk, thus giving him a shock which recalled him to a sense of his true condition. With difficulty he regained his standing, and then struggled on as before. Whither?

During the last twenty-four hours this question had been sounding in his ears. Where should he go? Who would receive him? He was afraid to die, else he would have put an end to the miserable life, worthless to himself, and worse than worthless to others. The day was waning. A cold wind swept down the street leading from the city proper to its northern suburbs. A drizzling rain began to fall, while the fast-increasing darkness threw a pall of gloom over every object.

Shivering, trembling, often pausing, as if to gain renewed strength, the man pressed forward. His wet garments clung to him, seeming to weigh him down; yet he dared not stay his steps. His eyes burned, and his temples throbbed with acutest pain. Still on he

went. He must have been familiar with every turn of the road, else he could never have found his way to the small, unpainted house, at the door of which he sank down utterly exhausted, as an involuntary groan escaped his parched lips.

"What is that?" asked a woman within the house, pausing to listen if the sound would be repeated.

"It's only the wind," replied a man who was busily engaged with some bits of wood.

"But it sounded like a groan, husband. Perhaps some poor creature is out in the storm; and, as mother says, there may be a chance to do good."

"Mother's always on the lookout for such chances. I mean to improve them when they come in my way; but the sound you heard is only the wind."

Thus saying, the man addressed himself to his work. The woman rose, and went to the street door, which she opened. Peering into the darkness, and seeing no one, she was about to return to the cozy room she had just left, when she fancied that she heard heavy breathing. She listened; then called her hus-

band, and instantly the light revealed the prostrate form of a man.

"It's Warland."

"Warland?" repeated the woman. "Dear me! what can be done?"

"There's only one thing to do now. Carry a light to the shop, and I'll take him round there."

The room, originally a shop, and still retaining the name, was connected with the house by a covered walk; and although roughly finished, afforded a comfortable shelter. Upon a low bedstead was a sack, filled with straw, and spread with clean, coarse bedding. A small box stove, a table, two chairs, and a low bench made up the furniture of the room. The almost senseless man introduced to this room was evidently an unwelcome guest; but, in his present condition, it mattered little whether he was greeted with smiles or frowns. A fire was lighted; his soiled, wet garments were removed; and after a thorough ablution, he was assisted to bed. When asked if he would have some food, he muttered a refusal; and presently was sleeping.

"Warland's worse off than I ever saw him before," said Mr. Dearbon, as he joined his

wife. "I'm mistaken, if he an't most through with this world."

"You've thought so before."

"I know I have. But he never looked as he does now. Either he's in great trouble, or else he's going to die. 'Twould be a good thing if he should die. The world would be rid of a wretch."

"I know it, husband. But he an't fit to die. It always makes me feel bad to have you talk so about him."

"He an't fit to live, either. There an't anybody in the world that wants him round. I'm sure we don't. I wouldn't let a dumb beast die for want of care I could give; and I wouldn't turn anybody away such a night as this. But I an't going to work to support Hastings Warland, when he's wasted fifty times as much money as I ever had. We've done enough for him before this."

"I know we have. But you'll let mother manage it, won't you? You know she don't mean we shall be any poorer for what we do for him, and she always pities him. She says he wa'n't brought up right. His father always let him have wine after he was old enough to come to the table."

"I know all that, and I know that mother says his father wa'n't much better than he is; only the family kept it to themselves. The Warlands have always been hard drinkers. That may be some excuse for him, and a reason why they should have patience with him; but it's no reason at all why other folks should have him round in the way. I hate any man like him. He's no worse than thousands of others. The trouble is, he's spent his money. If he'd had money enough to live in the style he began, he'd carried it out well enough. His wife would stayed with him, and—"

"Don't blame her, husband. Mother says she bore all she ought to, and ten times more. I'm glad mother happened to be away to-night. We'll see what she says when she comes home. She'll come to-morrow, if it's pleasant."

When morning dawned, there was no trace of the storm which had swept from off the sea, and spent itself during the early hours of the night. Mrs. Bennett reached home about noon.

"Who is in the shop?" she asked.

"Hastings Warland."

"And is he here again?" The tone in which this question was uttered made it more expressive than any mere declaration could have been. "When did he come?" The events of the last evening were related. Then another question: "What does he say for himself?"

"Not much," was the reply. "He covers his face when I go where he is."

"You've given him something to eat, Lois."

"Yes, mother. Luther carried him some breakfast. He said he didn't want any, but he ate every mouthful. He looks dreadfully—worse than he ever did before."

"It's bad business. But he an't alone. There's a great many more as bad off. It's the cursed drink, and it's all the same in the end, whether a boy begins with wine or with whiskey. If he's got money enough, he can keep on with the wine, and live in style. If he han't, he must come down, and be a gutter drunkard. It takes piles of money to keep up. Hastings had enough to live without work all his life; but how much better off is he now than any other poor wretch?"

"He's a miserable wretch?"

"I know it, Lois, I know it. But I pity

him, after all, poor boy. He used to be so bright and handsome. He'd make anybody like him, if he set out to. He was brought up to have his own way in everything; but he wa'n't to blame for that. Mrs. Ermengarde thought more of him than she did of any the rest; and if he'd married to suit her, she'd been likely to make him her heir. But there, Lois, I've talked this all over a good many times. I won't say no more about it; only I *do* wish he wouldn't come here."

"So do I, mother. Luther don't want him here. He says he don't want to work to provide for a Warland, and he hadn't ought to."

"No, Lois, he hadn't. I've always tried to pay for all Hastings has."

"I know it, mother, and that troubles Luther. I hope there'll be some way to make it all right; but I don't know how."

Mrs. Bennett was an old woman—eighty-five by the family register; and yet a stranger would have fancied her fifteen years younger. When scarcely more than a child, she had been employed in the family of General John Warland, Hastings Warland's grandfather; and although a servant, her obliging disposition

and quick intelligence made her a favorite with those she served.

Ermengarde, the pet of the household and the pride of her father's heart, was then a wee, toddling thing, imperious as a queen receiving the homage of her subjects. Yet, when it suited her mood, she was loving and tender, passionate in her demonstrations of affection or aversion, and withal a child of rare beauty. Mary Lanman, the young servant, quite won her heart, so that it was often said, "Mary is the only one who can manage Miss Ermengarde."

Time went on until the latter was eighteen years of age, when she became engaged to a distant relative, bearing the old name and possessing an ample fortune. For once all were pleased with the proposed alliance. The lovers were devoted in their attachment. The imperious manner which had characterized the young lady vanished in the presence of her affianced husband. She acknowledged Lionel Warland as her equal, and, too proud for coquetry, allowed him to see how dear he was to her.

As he was her first love, so he was the first who had ever received from her any tokens of

favor. He reigned in her heart supreme and alone. She would reign thus in his heart, or her happiness was destroyed.

How, no one could tell, not even herself; but in some way she was led to believe that he had loved another before seeing her; and this so haunted her that she was moved to speak some hasty words which a spirit as proud and sensitive as her own could illy brook. Lionel Warland could be both haughty and severe. He would make no confessions when challenged to do so. The strong will which had yielded to love's caressing touch reasserted itself. For a moment his betrothed bride feared him; the next moment she sent him from her.

"Do you mean it? Is it for all our lives?" he asked.

"For all our lives," she answered.

He left her; and without speaking to any member of the family, rode away. Two hours later, he was found by the roadside in a state of unconsciousness. He had been thrown from his horse—a most unaccountable thing for so fearless and constant a rider.

Of course he was carried to the house he had just left, and medical attendance instantly

summoned. No bones were fractured; and, beyond some bruises, no external injuries could be discovered. He regained consciousness, and, under the influence of powerful stimulants, was able to converse. The physician encouraged him to hope that the effects of the accident would be but slight and temporary.

But he judged differently. He assured those about him that he had not long to live. He asked for Ermengarde, desiring to see her alone. Mary Lanman carried his message. He was dying. Would she come to him?

She would have gone had she thus forfeited her life. Silently they went out, one by one, when they knew that she waited at the door. She went in, and, throwing herself upon her knees, begged forgiveness for the words of the morning.

Freely, tenderly, this was accorded; and then, in a husky voice, Lionel Warland acknowledged that he, too, had been in fault. His hasty temper had been too quick to take offence. Moreover, early as it was, having met some friends, he had drunk too freely of wine, thus aggravating a severe headache which left him hardly master of himself. "I alone

am to blame, and I pay the penalty," he said with a ghastly smile.

Here a paroxysm of pain silenced his voice; but he would not allow Ermengarde to call assistance. Still pressing her face to his own, he held her close. The paroxysm over, he talked of his love; of all he had hoped and anticipated; thanking her for all the happiness she had given him, and bidding her never to accuse herself as the cause of his death.

At length the physician returned to care for his patient.

"Don't leave me," whispered the injured man when, with instinctive delicacy, his companion would have freed herself from his embrace. "If you were only my wife!"

"O Lionel! if I only were," she murmured in reply.

At that moment the clergyman who had known her from her infancy entered the room. Advancing to the couch, he extended one hand to grasp that which was feebly outstretched to him; while he rested the other upon the bowed head of the still kneeling girl.

Not much was said. It was enough for him to know that before him were two who wished, ere death should part them, to call each

other by the endearing names of husband and wife. No one objected, and the marriage-service was performed. A strange bridal! The last word pronounced, a solemn stillness brooded over all, broken at length by the bridegroom, who asked for some one to write what he should dictate.

A friend of the family, who had come to render such assistance as he might, was ready to act as amanuensis. Then Lionel Warland, in a distinct voice, proceeded to dictate his last will and testament; by which he bequeathed to his dearly-beloved bride, Ermengarde, his entire property, wherever found, to be used and devised by her without limitation or control. With a careful choice of words he could never have excelled, he guarded against the possibility of the will being set aside by a quibble of law, at the same time calling upon all present to witness that he was in full possession of his mental powers, free from the restraint or influence of others. The will was duly signed, and given into the hands of the gentleman who had prepared it, for safe-keeping.

Messages to absent friends and relatives were then dictated.

"Nothing more," he murmured wearily, when asked if more was to be written. "If I have offended any, I ask forgiveness, as I freely forgive all who have in any way injured me."

The Warlands were not a religious family. With an outward deference for the ordinances of religion, had the men of this family given utterance to their true sentiments, they would have said that they felt themselves fully able to meet the exigencies of both life and death without calling for aid from any unseen power which might or might not exist. The women, with no more of actual pity, were constant in their attendance upon the services of the church; and, in a vague way, trusted the mercy and goodness of God.

Now, in the chamber of death, who should guide a wandering soul to the Father's house? The clergyman well knew the minds of those whom as his personal friends he had reason to respect and esteem; but he must do his duty, and leave the event with God.

The dying man listened to his words; then answered not irreverently: "I have never intended to make the world worse for my having lived in it, and, if I am to be judged, I

trust I shall be able to bear the sentence. I thank you for caring for me," he added. Then, after another pause, as the beaded drops gathered on his forehead: "Pray with me."

It may be the listeners felt not the invisible presence to whom prayer was addressed; but he who offered this prayer seemed to himself overshadowed by the majesty of One no eye hath seen. Lingering only for a last pressure of the shapely hand again extended, when his duty was done, the clergyman took his leave.

For the two succeeding days there was in that house a fearful struggle between life and death; and when it ended, Ermengarde Warland was a widow.

CHAPTER XV.

POVERTY AND WEALTH.

FOR years the young widow was seldom seen by strangers. She buried herself in solitude, or, with Mary Lanman as a companion, retraced the winding walks through wood and dell where she had wandered with her lover, whose memory hallowed each familiar scene. Mary was always a sympathizing listener to the oft-repeated tales of tenderness; always patient with the half-crazed girl, who allowed herself no enjoyment which might separate her thoughts from the dead.

When she reached the age of twenty-two, still wearing the weeds of widowhood, this companion left her; and not until then did the family know how much they were indebted to the faithful, intelligent servant. No one could take her place. No one would so bear the petulance of the widowed bride, who fancied her own claims paramount to all

others. She even questioned the right of Mary Lanman to assume new relations and responsibilities.

Yet a sense of gratitude prompted her to make some acknowledgment of the loving service which no money could repay. Among other gifts, useful and substantial, was a ring, upon which was engraved the family coat of arms, with the single word, "*Toujours.*"

"Send me this ring when you will, and ask what you will. Your request shall be granted."

These few lines accompanied the quaint, old-fashioned circlet of gold it had pleased the haughty woman to bestow, in queenly fashion, as a pledge of her friendship and favor.

Mary Lanman was thirty-four when she was married to George Bennett, who left her a widow at sixty, with one daughter, Mrs. Dearbon, who was introduced to our readers in the last chapter. Occasionally Mrs. Bennett had seen Mrs. Ermengarde Warland; but leading lives so widely different, as time went on, they drifted far apart. The ring had never been presented or a request made.

Yet all important changes in the family

were known to their former servant; and when Hastings Warland was a lad, he had boarded for a few weeks with Mrs. Bennett, whose home was then in the country. She understood him thoroughly; knew his faults, and was able to predict his probable future. When he married, she hoped her fears would not be realized. When told of his dissipation, she pitied him scarcely less than the beautiful wife he was dragging down with him.

Removing to her daughter's home, in some way she was found by the miserable man, who craved a shelter for the night. This would hardly have been denied to a stranger; surely not to one bearing the name of Warland. For years after this he had made his appearance from time to time; sometimes well dressed, and supplied with money, which he ostentatiously displayed, and sometimes habited like a beggar, without a penny to pay for a crust of bread. Now he had come again, wretched, and destitute, and unwelcome.

"Don't go to the shop till you've had your dinner," said Mrs. Dearbon. "Hastings Warland can wait for his."

It was not of his dinner he thought. He

longed with a wild, mad longing for some fiery, alcoholic drink. A shadow haunted him. Waking or sleeping—and he was not sure that he had slept since Dr. Saunders bade him farewell—his son, with rigid form and features, stood beside him. Shuddering, he shrank from the strange apparition; and yet it pressed upon him.

When Mrs. Bennett entered the room, he did not turn his face towards her.

"Hastings, why are you here in this plight?" she asked.

"Because I could go nowhere else," he replied with a groan. "I know you don't want me. I know it," he added bitterly. "They have all cast me off."

"Because you have cast off your manhood. Don't blame others. The fault is your own." No reply was made to this, and the woman presently said: "I have brought your dinner. Sit up to the table, and eat it. Then I am coming to have a long talk with you."

The plain food was eaten, and the large bowl of coffee eagerly drained. But this did not satisfy his unnatural appetite. He retreated to the corner, where he could most easily avoid observation, and waited for the return of

Mrs. Bennett. He dreaded her appearance, and yet he looked to her for help. She came in, and sat down without speaking. At length he raised his eyes, and met hers fixed full upon him.

"What shall I do?" he asked in a despairing tone.

"What do you wish to do?"

"I wish to die, soul and body."

"You have done all you could to kill them; but what there is left of your soul must live for ever. Don't you ever think of that, Hastings Warland?" No response. "Where did you come from?" was then asked.

"From the country," he replied with some hesitation.

"Where are your wife and son?"

"I—I left them in the country."

"When?"

"Yesterday. No, the day before that, I think. I'm not sure—O Mrs. Bennett! I can't tell. I'm going crazy. Don't you see John standing here beside me? He's dead. And—and I killed him! No, I didn't kill him. They say I did. But I didn't. Go away, John! Go away! I wouldn't

hurt you, John. You know I wouldn't. They're all against me. They say I killed you. But I didn't."

"Hastings Warland, what do you mean? Have you committed murder?"

"Murder! No, I wouldn't hurt my boy—all the boy there is. You know I couldn't do that."

Mrs. Bennett was at fault. She found it difficult to decide in regard to her companion's sanity; and when at last she was convinced that his excitement was due to recent causes, she determined, if possible, to learn what these causes had been. She asked many questions; and he, too miserable to resent her curiosity, answered them truthfully. He even revealed the fact that his wife had utterly discarded him. He hoped John was not seriously injured. He thought the matter had been overstated. Yet he acknowledged that he was crazed with liquor, and therefore incapable of forming a correct judgment.

This much was told in disconnected sentences—confessions wrung from a guilty soul which could no longer carry the burden of its guilt alone.

"What are you going to do now?"

"I don't know. What shall I do?" asked the unhappy man.

"I have told you over and over again, Hastings Warland. Give up drinking, and lead a sober life. You can do that?"

"Can I, Mrs. Bennett? Did you ever know a Warland to give up his wine and brandy?"

"You have gone beyond that."

"I was driven beyond that. I'm a poor man, and must take such as I can get. Don't you suppose I should prefer to sip my wine at a well-spread table, in an elegant house? That's the way my brothers do. Tell them what you have told me, and then hear what they will say."

"But they are not in your condition. They provide for themselves and their families."

"Yes, Mrs. Bennett. Do you think I'd be here, begging for a place to lay my head, if I had the money they have? They have cooler heads than mine; but, curse them! they care as much for drink as I do. They'd take my boy, and bring him up like a gentleman, and they'd let me starve.

But they sha'n't have my boy. He belongs to me, and there's not another in the generation."

"Then come what will, you won't give up drinking."

"I haven't said so," he replied impatiently. "I don't know. I know you don't want me here," he added humbly. "But if you'll let me stay till I'm stronger, I can pay you."

"We want no pay; but you can stay." Saying this, Mrs. Bennett returned to the house.

"Well, mother?"

"It's anything but well," was the response to this salutation. "I told Hastings he could stay till he's stronger. According to his own story, he's cast off by everybody." This story was then repeated, with the comment: "Some part of it must be true."

The next morning the occupant of the shop was seriously ill. The physician who was called pronounced his symptoms to be those of brain fever, and expressed serious doubts as to his recovery.

Mrs. Bennett consulted with herself as to what should be done. There was enough and

to spare in the Warland family. Mrs. Ermengarde Warland was a wealthy woman, yearly adding to her property from its own income, of which she spent a comparatively small part. Her home was more than a hundred miles away. But Mrs. Bennett was accustomed to travelling and familiar with the route. She did not fear to attempt the journey; and, waiving all objections offered by her daughter, she made the necessary preparations.

"I am perfectly able to go," she said decidedly. "There is no change of cars; and, old as I am, I can sit still till I reach the city. Then I can take a carriage to the house. We can't turn Hastings Warland into the street. 'Twould go against my conscience to do that. But I'm not going to provide for him, as long as some one else is under obligation to do it. If I don't succeed, then we'll see what else can be done. I sha'n't be gone but one night, and I have faith that I'm doing as the Lord directs."

This was conclusive. At noon Mrs. Bennett started on her mission. Fortunately, an acquaintance of her son-in-law was going in the same direction, and saw her safely in a

carriage for Mr. John Warland's before leaving her.

Mrs. Ermengarde Warland occupied a suite of rooms in the old family mansion, now owned by her nephew, which had been so enlarged and improved that there were ample accommodations for the separate establishment she chose to maintain.

Up to the very boundaries of the estate the land was occupied; so that what had once been a secluded country residence was now in the suburbs of a bustling city. Yet it was easily recognized by one to whom every tree and stone had for years been familiar.

Mrs. Warland was at home. Would the lady give her name?

Instead of this was given a tiny parcel, with the explanation, "Mrs. Warland will know."

The visitor had not long to wait before the servant returned to say that Mrs. Warland would see her. Doors swung noiselessly. Not a footfall was heard, as Mrs. Bennett passed through the hall and up a long flight of stairs, lighted by an arched window of stained glass. She stood within the room where was seated her former mistress and companion.

"Mary, you are welcome."

How strangely sounded this name to the aged woman, as she advanced to the chair, from which her hostess did not rise! "I am glad to see you, Mrs. Warland. I hope you are well."

"Thank you, Mary. Be seated. Have you come far to-day?"

To this question Mrs. Bennett answered frankly that she had come a long distance to prefer a request which she trusted would be granted.

"I will hear that when you are refreshed," was said kindly. "I never forget my promises."

The visitor did not feel the need of refreshment. But a servant was summoned, who showed her to a room where she could lay aside her bonnet and shawl, and make the slight changes in her toilet which were required. She was then served with dinner; and from the dining-room went again to Mrs. Warland.

"I hope you have been made comfortable," remarked her hostess.

"I have been," was the laconic reply.

"Ah! Mrs. Bennett, time has dealt lightly

with you. When I first saw you, I could think of you only as Mary. You are the very same after all these years. I have thought of you more than usual in the last few days. How long is it since I gave you this ring?"

"Fifty years to-day."

"Fifty years! Is it possible? I was young then. Now I am old. But I am ready to redeem the pledge of my youth. What is it you desire?"

"Nothing for myself. I have come to ask you to make some provision for your nephew, Hastings Warland."

"How dare you—" The circlet of gold caught the speaker's eye, and arrested the angry words which trembled upon her lips. "Do you know that I have no such nephew?"

"I know that he is disowned," replied Mrs. Bennett calmly. "He came to my home a beggar, ragged and starving, and without a place to lay his head. He was drenched with rain, and he fell at the door senseless. My son-in-law took him in. He has done it many times before, and I have paid for the trouble. I was away from home. I came back yesterday. Hastings told me he hadn't a place in

the world to go to, and begged of me to let him stay. I couldn't turn him into the street, so I told him he might stay till he was stronger. This morning he was sick, threatened with brain fever, and, with his habits, he will be likely to die. I should starve before I would ask help for *myself;* but I ask it for Hastings Warland, one of your own family. He has stronger claims upon you than upon me."

These words were fitly chosen. In her long intercourse with an educated family, the speaker had acquired habits of expression which gave her great advantage. She knew, also, that plain, direct statements would be more likely to effect her purpose than elaborate appeals. She waited for a response, which took the form of a question:

"Where is Hastings' wife?"

"At her father's."

"And his son?"

"With his mother, if he is alive."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Bennett? Don't tell me that boy is dead."

"If he is, his father is a murderer."

"A murderer! Tell me—"

There was not much to tell. Nothing posi-

tive ; for a man so imbruted as Hastings Warland could hardly be trusted in his best moments. But what had been told to her Mrs. Bennett repeated.

"It is not a matter of choice with me," now said Mrs. Warland coldly. "I should grant any request of yours which was possible to me. You will understand that I acknowledge no claim of this man to my regard or assistance. He bears an old name which has been honored and respected. He has disgraced it. But I will provide for him. If he should die, there will be the expenses of his sickness and burial. If he should live, he must have an ample support. What will be sufficient for that?"

This question had hardly been asked when a generous sum was proposed by Mrs. Warland herself.

"The family will think I have acted foolishly," she then remarked. "We thought we had done with Hastings. But he must not beg from others while he bears our name. It all comes of a foolish marriage. If his wife was a true woman, she would never desert him."

"Don't blame his wife, Mrs. Ermengarde.

You would never bear a tithe of what she has borne. *You* would never starve in a garret for a man who spent his money in the lowest haunts of the city. *I* wouldn't do it. If no one else will endure his presence, how can she? She has borne enough."

Perhaps it was that some tender chord was touched by the name to which she answered in her youth, or it might be that her sympathy was aroused. The haughty woman would seldom in her life have tolerated such a rebuke; but now she received it in silence. After a time, she answered mildly, "Hastings' wife is not like me. She was never a fitting mate for him."

Mrs. Bennett did not care to continue the discussion. She had defended the absent, as it was both her duty and her pleasure to do. Beyond this her fine sense of propriety forbade her to go.

Her hostess proceeded to business. A sufficient sum of money was placed in her hands to meet the immediate expenses of the unfortunate man, and with this a guarantee for the payment of stipulated sums in the future. Her travelling expenses, too, were paid, and ample remuneration made for the

charity bestowed upon Hastings Warland in the past.

The faithful friend had no reason to complain of her reception or entertainment. The object of her journey was accomplished; and with the ring still in her possession, she reached home, after an absence of less than two days.

Her daughter met her at the door with the exclamation, "O mother! it is such a relief to see you. I hope you have brought some money."

"I have brought enough," was her reply.

"Then you have brought a good deal. That man is dreadfully sick, and needs the best of care. I don't think he's worth it, but I suppose he must have it."

For days it seemed that he must die; then he began to improve, so slowly that it required the closest attention to detect any positive amendment. Beggar as he was, he suffered for no lack of care. A professional nurse remained with him day and night. Various articles were added to the furniture of his room, which was made as comfortable as possible.

It was not until the last of April that he

was able to leave his bed. His convalescence was retarded by the very regimen which his best good demanded. Mrs. Bennett insisted that he should be treated without stimulants, and carried her point against both nurse and physician. Sometimes he begged piteously for wine or brandy, and, when denied, would manifest the greatest rage. Sometimes he would weep like a child over some fancied grievance; yet it was supposed that his mind would gain strength with his body.

The event proved otherwise. His brain had received a shock from which it did not rally. As the summer advanced, he delighted in the sunshine, resting idly in a luxurious chair which had been provided for him, or moving slowly about the garden. He seemed to have forgotten the past. He never talked of wife or child. He did not even read.

During the summer months his room was handsomely finished and furnished. The walls were hung with brightly-colored pictures, and the carpet was like a bed of roses.

All these changes were welcomed as a child would welcome them; and, in his delight, something of the old childish look came back to his face. He addressed Mrs. Bennett as

"mother," and seemed to find happiness in her presence.

Mr. and Mrs. Dearbon would have preferred that he should be cared for elsewhere; but the generous remuneration made to them forbade any complaint. The stipulated sum, promptly remitted by Mrs. Ermengarde Warland, was faithfully applied to its intended purpose. Whatever surplus remained was well invested, to be returned should circumstances demand it.

Mr. Dearbon employed his leisure in fashioning whatnots, racks, fancy boxes, and other dainty articles of bits of woods of varied quality and pattern; all arranged in accordance with some symmetrical design, and then skilfully polished. Hastings Warland would watch this work for hours, fascinated by the blending of colors and the adaptation of shapes; and when materials were placed in his own hands, he surprised those about him with the skill and taste which he manifested.

Here was a new resource for him, and through the winter days this, with dissected maps, illustrated papers, and engravings, beguiled the time which must otherwise have passed drearily.

How long he might live in this condition was a matter of uncertainty. The physician who attended him, and who was interested in his case, as one out of the common course, pronounced his bodily health quite restored. He had been in his present retreat somewhat more than a year, when Mr. Dearbon obtained reliable information of his wife and child, learning also that all legal bonds between them were sundered. Later, he heard of Mrs. Warland's change of residence.

Still the husband and father was unconscious of their existence. No allusion was made to them in his presence. Indeed, all efforts to rouse him to a realization of the past had so often failed that they were now entirely abandoned; and what was once deplored as a calamity came to be regarded a blessing.

Such a life seemed scarcely worth the living, and yet a wise Providence prolonged it.

CHAPTER XVI.

TEMPTATION.

THE letter which Mr. Archer had placed in the hand of Winthrop Hayes was from Mr. John Warland; that gentleman having been informed that his nephew was employed by the firm of "H. Archer & Co."

The communication was dignified, and as reserved as the nature of the case would admit. Notwithstanding all which had transpired, the proud family still hoped to educate "the boy" as befitted his name and ancestry. They had tried persuasion, arguments, and threats; and now, humiliating as was the condescension, they asked for Mr. Archer's influence. The writer expressed himself certain that, could his unfortunate brother be made to comprehend the situation, the matter would be settled at once. No allusion was made to the mother. Evidently, she was considered of no importance.

"I don't know what I am expected to do," remarked Mr. Archer when the letter had been read. "I am sure of one thing. There is nothing I *could* do, if I was disposed to interfere. John understands all about it. He knows what he is sacrificing, and what he is likely to gain. His mother would rather he would die than go to the Warlands."

"His mother is a sensible woman. Send him to the Warlands, and there would be ninety-nine chances out of a hundred for him to follow his father's example."

"I don't think that, Winthrop. You overstate it. The boy is not all Warland. There is some good blood in his veins. His mother comes of a sturdy stock. But whatever he is, he does his duty faithfully in the store; and as long as he does that, I will do the best I can for him. If the Warlands make a strike for John, they will find two determined women against them. John has a pleasant home, and I think I'll mention that fact when I answer Mr. Warland's letter. It may be well for me to say, too, that John needs his mother's influence, and could not be induced to leave her. Then he told me to-day that he would rather be a merchant than study a pro-

fession. So I don't see but what he's in the right place."

"John is where he ought to be," Winthrop Hayes made reply. "He needs to work, and feel that he must depend upon his own exertions. If anything will save him, that will. Idleness is a curse. I know that by experience."

"I suppose you are crowded with business in the office," now said Mr. Archer, wishing to change the current of his companion's thoughts.

"Yes, there will always be business where Hilton is. He can be trusted. He is not to be bought or bribed; and his pleas are made of the best material."

"That reminds me, Winthrop, that Hilton told me you were to make the plea in an important case at the next term of court. I shall be sure to hear it, and I expect to be very proud of you."

"I hope you will be," was replied. "Now I really must go. Good-evening."

Going to his rooms, Mr. Hayes took a circuitous way leading past the office; and, seeing that it was lighted, ascended the stairs to find Hilton hard at work.

"I am glad you have come," said the latter heartily. "I believe I am tired. But I must consult some authorities, to substantiate a point I wish to make, and I wish to be through with it before I go home."

The work divided, it was quickly done; when something in the appearance of his fellow-worker attracted Horace Hilton's attention.

"What is it?" he asked, repeating the question both so well understood.

"The old story," was responded. "If there were wine on this table, I should drink it, if I knew it would send me to perdition."

"It *would* send you to perdition."

"I know it. I know it a thousand times better than you do. But sometimes I am afraid I shall go back. I only pledged myself for a year, and it is now nearly two years since I came here and asked you to give work to a beggar."

"And what have you done since then, Hayes?"

"The best I could. God knows I have tried to be faithful to you and to my pledge."

"And you will persevere. I know you will, Hayes. You have everything to gain. I can only remind you of that, as I have done so often before."

"I know there is everything for me to gain; and I know, too, that I might lose everything by a single throw."

I think it is in some such mood as now possessed Winthrop Hayes, that men and women who have once been reclaimed from evil courses return to them with reckless abandonment. The craving for excitement, the demands of appetite, and the rush of disordered thoughts paralyze the resistant forces, and bear their victim on to destruction.

The next morning the two lawyers met as usual. Temptation had been again resisted, and a day's close application was rewarded by a night of restful sleep. As yet, the reformed man had avoided those places where his powers of resistance would be most severely tried. His old associates had relinquished all hope of winning him back to their companionship; and in the hurry of their fast lives, almost ceased to think of him.

When it was known, however, that he was

to appear in court as the advocate in an important case, the fact attracted attention. He won his laurels in the presence of an appreciative audience. There were Mr. and Mrs. Archer, Mrs. Warland, and Miss Pease, besides many others who had known him as an idle man of fashion.

When opportunity offered, these friends congratulated him warmly upon his success. Even Mrs. Archer expressed her pride and pleasure. Horace Hilton frankly acknowledged that his expectations were more than realized.

The following day the hero of the hour received an invitation to a complimentary supper at a fashionable hotel. Against his own better judgment he accepted this invitation.

"I must try myself," he said. "I cannot always live like a recluse. I must learn to refuse wine, and then sit by while others drink it. Until I can do that, I am but half a man."

"Better half a man than not at all a man," replied Hilton.

"Yes, I know that by experience. I must learn some other things in the same way. I know all you would say, and I feel the full

force of it. But in my own soul, I believe I can resist to the end; although my judgment wavers, I sincerely hope that the spell of the wine-cup for me is broken. Yet I am not sure. It may be there will come other struggles, when I shall need to find you and be put to hard work. Hilton, there's not another person on the face of the earth to whom I would acknowledge my weakness. I am going to try myself, though my judgment hardly approves."

"Then— But I have no right to dictate to you. Pray God you may not fall!"

"If I do, you will never see me again."

It would be difficult to account for the conflicting thoughts which prompted this utterance. There must have been a mingling of manly independence with pride and defiance. Love of approbation had been stimulated by success; and the speaker was not unmindful of the social popularity he might perhaps regain. While uncertain of his ability to do available work in his profession, and thus retrieve his fortune, he had not cared for this; and now he wondered at the interest which had been aroused.

On his way to the hotel he encountered a

crowd at the door of a drug-store, and, upon asking the cause, was told that a man had just fallen on the sidewalk, drunk or dead, no one knew which.

"Used to be a swell cove," remarked a rough-looking fellow. "Shined his boots lots o' times. Spent his tin for liquor, same's the rest, and got throwed."

Winthrop Hayes made his way through the crowd, and entered the store.

"It's Jeff Moulton," some one was saying.

"Jeff Moulton! Has he come to this? Is he dead?"

"No, he's drunk," responded a police officer carelessly. "That's the way the world goes. Sparkling wine and champagne in cut glass as long as the money lasts. Then whiskey and New England rum in tin cups till the miserable fellows forget their trouble, the same as this one has. No use making any great fuss about it. There's too many for that. The city will give a night's lodging free, and perhaps throw in board for a month or two."

This was Jeff Moulton, whose dainty habits had been proverbial, and whose fastidious

tastes had made him conspicuous among his fellows. Drunk! And with the vilest of liquors, as the fumes of his breath testified. Winthrop Hayes had known him well in other days. They had spent many an hour together, where a feast of costly viands and a flow of choicest wines made men forget that the soul was more than the body.

For a consideration the officer was willing to provide the unfortunate man with comfortable quarters for the night, and detain him in the morning until a friend should appear.

This accomplished, it was not long before the friend was welcomed in a brilliantly-lighted room, where his appearance was hailed with pleasure. The gentlemen had feared that he would not come.

"I was detained," he said by way of apology. Then turning to a man beside him, he asked: "Have you known anything of Jeff Moulton recently?"

"I've heard he was going to destruction on a fast horse," was the reply. "Always was delicate, you know. Couldn't stand what the rest of us could. Sorry for him, though. Got a good father and mother somewhere. But

let him go. What made you think of him, Hayes?"

"I have just seen him, and engaged an officer to look after him until I go round in the morning. I could hardly believe the evidence of my own senses. But I know that I saw Jeff Moulton, dressed like a beggar, and so much intoxicated that the officer rolled him over as you would a log, and he knew nothing about it."

Exclamations of sympathy, regret, and disgust, all were uttered; when one, more reckless than his companions, said mockingly: "That's a jolly way of getting through with life. Make the most of it, and then submit without a murmur to the buffetings of fate, even if they *do* come from the boot of a policeman. I trust I shall be able to maintain my dignity as well as Jeff. Complaints are for women and children; not for men, who hold their destiny in their own hands."

"Not exactly," rejoined another. "Women have something to say about the destiny of men, and something to do about it too. But for a woman, Jeff Moulton would never be where he is now. I know all about it;

and, for the sake of giving the poor fellow his due, I should like to tell his story."

"I should like to hear it," said Winthrop Hayes.; and however distasteful the subject might be to the remainder of the company, no objection was made.

"Jeff Moulton is a good-hearted, generous-souled fellow, as most of us know. The only trouble with him is his dissipation; and once he got the better of that. Signed the pledge, and went into business. His father furnished the money, and there was every reason to expect that Jeff would do well. He was firm too. I asked him once to take wine with me, and he refused in such a manly way that I thought better of him than I ever did before. I didn't know anything about his pledge, or I wouldn't have asked him. It's likely I shall always drink wine more or less; but if a man gives it up because he thinks that's best for him, I'm not one to take the responsibility of influencing him against his better judgment. Moulton refused me as decidedly as though it were a case of life and death. Of course he was obliged to show his colors often. But he stood by them bravely, until at a party some young ladies, who had drunk too much wine them-

selves, laid a wager that they would make him break his pledge.

"The one who would be likely to have the strongest influence was chosen to effect their purpose, and she succeeded. She touched her own lips to the wine, and then, looking straight into his eyes, asked him to drink her health. You can imagine how it all was better than I can tell you. A woman held Jeff Moulton's destiny in her hands, and she lured him to destruction. Say what you will, the destiny of any nation is in the hands of the women of that nation."

This simple recital produced a marked although varied effect upon those who heard it. It was not a fitting prelude to the proposed entertainment of the evening; and by the efforts of some of the company a more cheerful subject was introduced.

When they sat down to supper, Winthrop Hayes quite eclipsed himself in his brilliant repartees and bon-mots. He listened to his friends, seeming to think only of the present; yet clear and distinct as the tones of a bell rang in his ears these words: "If I fall. If I fall." No other heard it. No other realized how much depended upon that single even-

ning. His wit flashed and sparkled with still increasing brilliancy until the decisive moment arrived.

He said calmly: "Gentlemen, if I taste this wine, I am a doomed man. So sure as a drop passes my lips, I shall relinquish every hope of this life and of the life to come. Shall I drink with you?" he asked, scanning the faces of those around him.

There was no reply. He extended his hand, as if to grasp the fatal cup, when it was snatched away by the gentleman who had told the story of Jeff Moulton's fall.

"For God's sake, Hayes, don't touch it. If you've spoken the truth, it would be worse than suicide."

"I have spoken the truth, and *only* the truth," was responded with the same calmness which had characterized the statement previously made. "It is nothing of which I should be disposed to boast. I regret, gentlemen, that I should interfere with your arrangements, or do anything to mar the pleasure of this occasion. But I must beg you to excuse me. Accept my thanks for your kindness." And with a graceful bow, Winthrop Hayes left the room.

Exclamations more emphatic than refined followed his departure. Questions were asked without a thought of answers being given.

"Would he have taken wine had no one interposed? Having taken it, would he have relapsed into his old habits? Had he relapsed, at whose door would have been the guilt of his so doing? Ought not every man to have sufficient force of will to drink moderately without being in danger of indulging to excess? Did total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks conduce to the best good of the abstainer? Had it done so in the case of Mr. Hayes?"

These questions might be out of order. Nevertheless, they were discussed with more or less of earnestness by nearly all present; while many a glass of wine was scarcely tasted.

"I am glad Hayes had the manliness to say what he did. I honor him for it, just as I honored Moulton for refusing to drink with me. If the poor fellow had only persevered, he would have saved himself and his friends a vast amount of suffering. Hayes has showed us what he can do at his best; and I should never forgive myself, if I had been the means of leading him to do his worst."

"Who thought of coming here to a temperance meeting?" now exclaimed one. "That was not down on the programme or bill of fare. If it had been, I should be prepared with something to say. We are not all like Hayes and Moulton. Some of us have heads that are tolerably clear and strong."

"Stronger heads than yours and mine have yielded to the power of wine. But I'll not preach upon this subject until I have a better right than now. I shall look after Jeff Moulton, and see what can be done for him. We must not let him go down out of sight without making an effort to save him."

This speaker was he who had said that it was likely he should continue to drink wine; but it must be acknowledged that he returned to his home that night with new thoughts stirring his heart.

The next morning Winthrop Hayes went early to the station-house. As I have before said, he was not a philanthropist. He did not seek his old acquaintance with the same feelings which would have actuated Horace Hilton in a similar visit. Nevertheless, he went with an honest purpose to do what he could for the degraded man. The immediate effects of the

late debauch were still visible; and a more pitiable object is rarely seen than was presented when the door of a private cell was thrown open to admit the visitor.

"Good-morning, Moulton."

"Good-morning," was replied with stammering tongue. "Say, give a poor fellow something to drink, will you? Got hard up, and han't nary a red."

"Look up, Moulton. See who I am. Open your eyes."

"Can't tell who you are. Eyes an't quite right. Say, give a fellow a drink, will you? An't particular what's the kind."

Winthrop Hayes rushed from the cell thoroughly disgusted, and locked the door behind him. He made sure that the prisoner would receive all necessary attention through the day, ordered substantial food and strong coffee from a neighboring restaurant to be sent at the proper hours, and turned to his own business.

Again in the street, he met Mr. Abbot, who had spoken a kind word for the young man, and with whom he now discussed what should be done.

"He needs everything. It will be a hard

pull for him to regain what he has lost; but I suppose it is possible for him. *I* couldn't do it. Perhaps *he* can."

"Hayes, allow me to congratulate you," said Mr. Abbot, in reply. "You took us by surprise last evening, but every one of us thought the better of you for speaking so frankly. Should you have taken the wine, if I hadn't snatched it away?"

"It was not my intention to take it. But it was best for me to leave you before your drinking had progressed very far."

"Best to err on the safe side. As you have seen Moulton, I will postpone my visit until later in the day. If any new plan for his benefit suggests itself, I will report to you. We must save him if we can."

Then to the office, where Mr. Hilton was already at work.

"Good-morning."

"Good-morning."

There was nothing to conceal, nothing for which to be anxious, as this salutation was exchanged. It was nearly noon before any reference was made to what had transpired the previous evening; and at that time Jeff Moulton was the theme of conversation. As

it had resulted, the supper seemed of comparatively small importance.

"If a woman tempted Jeff Moulton to break his pledge, she is the one to reclaim him," said Horace Hilton. "Whoever she is, it is only right that she should know what she has done. If every woman would refuse to drink wine herself, and frown upon its use in others, we should soon see it banished from sideboard and bar. Whatever may be true in regard to other great interests, the women of the country have this in their own hands. I am hoping for the appearance of some woman, endowed with persuasive eloquence and personal magnetism, who will attract to herself all classes and conditions of society, and so teach this truth that her sisters will feel their responsibility."

"How would you have her do this?" asked Mr. Hayes.

"How? In the same way that all reforms are carried. With pen and tongue. In private circles, and on the platform, if this should seem best to her. It is not for me to dictate. Prejudices and traditions ought never to stand in the way of a great work. If souls can be saved, who is to dictate how these souls are to

be reached and aroused to a sense of their danger? If our country can be saved from the thraldom of intemperance I, for one, will bid God-speed to any man or woman who strikes a blow to sever the chains."

CHAPTER XVII.

FASHIONABLE DRINKING.

JEFF MOULTON was taken from the station-house clothed and in his right mind. A boarding-place was provided for him where he would have the comforts of a home, and still be shielded from temptation. Here he had time for reflection. He remembered his broken pledge; recalled the very moment of his fall, when Clara Truman, with ruby lips and starry eyes, had challenged him to pledge her her in the wine-cup.

Before this he had loved her. He could not hate her, even now, when all that made life desirable had been sacrificed at the shrine of her thoughtlessness; and he knew, only too well, that she regarded him as unworthy of her notice.

Mr. Abbot had been told the name of this young lady. Mr. Hayes soon heard it, and learned that Mabel Pease had a slight ac-

quaintance with Miss Truman. She was a gay, careless girl, whose fashionable education had by no means tended to develop the best elements of her character.

"I believe there is more of good in her than she herself knows," said one who decided to appeal to her in behalf of Mr. Moulton.

Mabel Pease was too wise to do this abruptly. But choosing time and place, she led the conversation to the desired point. The recent disgraceful fall of one who had stood high in society provided the opportunity desired, and from this one instance it was easy to draw general conclusions.

To these her companion assented, with many ejaculations of surprise and disgust that any man could stoop to drink to intoxication. White hands were uplifted, and rosebud lips were curled in scorn.

"Then I am sure you would not willingly do anything to tempt a man to such a fate."

"Indeed I would not," Miss Truman replied, astonished, it may be, at the remark. "I am not such an advocate of temperance as you have the reputation of being; but I detest drunkenness as much as you *can*. I

always drop a young man from my list of acquaintances as soon as I know that he drinks to excess. Papa says I am a wonder in that respect. He thinks I am hard on the poor fellows. But I feel it to be my duty, Miss Pease; and, besides, I am always disgusted with anything which approaches intoxication. If I were married, and my husband should come home to me intoxicated, I should leave him at once."

"Then if you were engaged to be married, and you found that your lover was in the habit of drinking to excess, you would break your engagement?"

"I should, Miss Pease. I could not trust my happiness in the hands of such a man." And as this was said, the fair, young face wore an expression of seriousness far from habitual. "I know you must think as I do about this."

"I think all which you do, and far more," was the reply. "I believe the trouble has its foundation in fashionable drinking. There are many men who cannot drink a single glass of wine with safety—men who must choose between total abstinence and drunkenness. That is a coarse word, Miss Truman; yet it

fails to express the coarseness of the state it indicates. Perhaps you never thought of this. I never thought there was any harm in the moderate use of wine, until my attention was called to it by the history of one of my dearest friends. It is too sad for me to repeat. Another fact. I was slow to learn that when the habit of excessive indulgence is fastened upon a man, there is but one way in which he can escape from it. He must abstain entirely from everything which can intoxicate. Not a drop must pass his lips. If it does, he must fight over again the battle with his appetite. There is Mr. Moulton."

"O Miss Pease! don't tell me I am to blame for his going down. I didn't think of the consequences when I asked him to drink wine with me. It was foolish, and I have always been sorry. Papa don't know. If he did, he would blame me severely."

"Not more severely than you must blame yourself, Miss Truman. From that evening Mr. Moulton returned to his old habits."

"But it was not such a dreadful thing which I did, Miss Pease. My brother would not refuse to drink with a lady, and there is no danger of his being a drunkard."

"There may not be. He may be one of those who can drink moderately all their lives. Mr. Moulton was not like him. You did not know that."

"No, Miss Pease, I never thought of it. What can I do? You see I cannot go to him and say that I am sorry. That would be improper."

"Not half so improper as to offer him wine," was Mabel's mental reply, which, however, she did not express in words.

"I am very sorry," continued Miss Truman. "I ought to do something to make amends. But papa would think it very strange, if I should—try." This last word was added after a long pause. "Please tell me what you think I ought to do."

"I cannot do that," was answered gently. "If I had a good, wise father, it seems to me that I should go to him with all my perplexities; unless I was so happy as to have a mother in whose judgment I had more confidence."

Clara Truman was not entirely spoiled. She knew that she could expect no help from her mother; and, with many misgivings, she appealed to her father, who listened patiently to her somewhat rambling story.

"I have heard of this before; only I never imagined that you were the guilty party," he said, with his hand close clasped in that of his daughter. "It has proved a serious matter to Moulton."

"Yes, papa, and I am so sorry. I never thought there was any harm in it."

"Well, pet, don't cry about it. We will see what can be done for him. He ought to have had a better command of himself. But we must take people as they are, and not as they ought to be. I think you overstepped the bounds of propriety yourself in doing as you did, Clara."

"I am afraid I did, papa. But you see all the rest of us had been drinking wine, while Mr. Moulton refused; and we didn't fancy his being so singular, as though he was better than we were. I have seen a great many ladies do the same thing which I did, and I don't know as any harm came of it. Foster wouldn't refuse to drink. Why, papa, what is it?" exclaimed Clara, interrupting herself, as an expression of pain flitted across her father's face. "Are you sick?"

"No, pet. It is nothing."

"But you *must* tell me, papa. Now I have

confessed everything to you, just as I always do. I expected a scolding too. I know I deserved it. It can't be that Foster ever— Why, papa, I believe it would kill me, if I thought my darling brother would ever be as Mr. Moulton is now."

"Mr. Moulton has brothers and sisters, who love him as well as you love Foster."

"And to think that I am the one who made him break his pledge! What shall I do? What *can* I do? But, papa, *is* there anything wrong with Foster?"

"I hope not. Only in these days young men often forget that a good servant makes a bad master. Used moderately, wine is harmless; used immoderately, it is a curse."

"Then why don't we give up drinking wine altogether? That would be the safest way. There couldn't be any danger then. That is what Mabel Pease says, and I know there are a good many other nice people who think as she does. Now, papa, let's you and I make a promise, right here, before mamma and Foster come home. We might put it down in writing, too, to make sure, and then see what will come of it. I think that would be making a splendid beginning.

I always have a headache the next day after a party, and I shouldn't wonder a bit if it is the wine that does it. Perhaps, too, that is what makes you look at Foster as you do sometimes, as though you were afraid he would do something he ought not to. Now, papa, you just write a promise all out, and put your name first. I am glad I stayed at home with you this evening. It is ever so much pleasanter than I expected. I thought you would shake your head, and put your lips together, and scold poor little me."

For answer to this rambling talk, Mr. Truman pressed his lips to the brow of the talker. He had not been more unprepared for the confession she had made than for the proposal which followed it. Nestling close to him, she waited for him to speak. His daughter was now cradled in his arms, but he could not always shield her thus. He thought of his son, for whom he indulged the most ambitious hopes. His breath came thick and fast. Love did not blind him to the faults of his son; and, like Clara, he believed it would kill him should Foster go wrong.

"Suppose you write the pledge to suit yourself," he said at length. "You proposed it."

"Yes, papa; but you must promise not to laugh, if it is ever so funny."

I am sure no temperance pledge was ever prepared with greater care. It was written and rewritten until it was pronounced perfect.

"I don't think I could possibly improve it," remarked the young lady, who evidently considered it above criticism. "Now sign it, papa."

"Read it first," was the reply. "I must know what I am signing. It might be a check for fifty thousand dollars."

"Ah! you know better than that. But I am willing to read it. You see it is just as strong as it can be. I wanted to make it so, though it will be pretty hard never to taste a single drop of wine again. I do like it with a lunch, and sometimes when I feel blue it brightens up everything, so I forget the blues."

No one else could have persuaded Mr. Truman to put his name to such a pledge. He was surprised into doing what he had been heard to say was a proof of weakness.

"Do you know what you have done?" he asked, looking into his daughter's face.

"You have banished wine from our table and our house. If any one asks you to drink as you asked Moulton, you must not allow yourself to be over-persuaded, as he was. Can you keep your pledge?"

"Yes, sir. You see it is different with us girls. We can have it all our own way, and, if we should agree, there isn't a young man in our set who would presume to taste of wine in our presence. We could make it so unpopular after a while they would be glad to give it up entirely. I must tell Winnie Lawton. She must help us about Foster. He just worships the ground she treads on, and she can be very decided. If she had been with me, I don't believe I should have teazed poor Moulton as I did. You find a way to help him, won't you, papa?"

"I will try."

With this assurance Clara Truman was content, and, as her father had some writing which must be done that evening, she betook herself to a corner, and began to read. At least, she seemed to read, although an attentive observer would have noticed that no leaves of her book were turned. With her eyes upon the printed page, she was thinking

earnestly of such things as had never before claimed her consideration. The world had been to her merely a place of enjoyment; like a garden in which the butterfly flits from flower to flower, unmindful of the barren wastes around, or the chilling blasts of a coming winter.

The next morning the young lady brought forward her pledge, and, with the utmost confidence of manner, asked her mother and brother to sign it. At first they regarded the whole matter as a joke. Later, when they found that she was really in earnest, they protested against such a quixotic scheme as she proposed, and refused to give it their influence.

Mr. Truman said nothing until asked if he intended to regard his pledge as binding. "Certainly I do," he then replied, and relapsed into silence. At dinner his intentions were fully manifested; and, as he had expected, they met with severe condemnation.

Clara came to the rescue, and encouraged her father by saying that she had obtained six new names to her pledge, and should have as many more within twenty-four hours, adding: "I called upon Mabel Pease to-day,

and had a long talk with her about it. I think we girls have been very ignorant and very much to blame; and so Winnie Lawton said just as soon as I told her how it was."

"Did she sign your pledge?" asked Foster.

"Of course she did. She is the most decided of us all. She always perseveres in everything she undertakes, too; and if any wine-drinking young man thinks he can win her favor, he will find himself mistaken. We are not going to make any public demonstration, but we shall wear our colors conspicuously."

The brother heard all this with affected indifference, and yet every word went home to his heart. "And you expect the young men to follow your lead?" he remarked.

"We expect to lead," was the laconic reply.

Mr. Truman looked at his daughter with profound astonishment. He had thought of her as a child. She was asserting her position as a woman, and withal so charmingly, that her mother, who sincerely regretted what she had done, could say nothing more severe than to remind her that she was making herself singular.

"Not very singular, mamma," was replied. "You see I have just discovered that drinking wine is a very bad thing. It makes drunkards, and—"

"There are plenty of drunkards in the world who never tasted of wine. They know no more about it than they do of the Heliconian springs!" exclaimed Foster Truman, interrupting his sister unceremoniously. "Do you suppose the miserable wretches who are up before the police court every morning ever drank anything better than Jersey whiskey?"

"Yes, sir. I know some of them have," answered Clara, and proceeded forthwith to substantiate her statement.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOTH SIDES OF THE PICTURE.

MR. ARCHER replied to Mr. Warland's letter to the effect that he had no authority over his young clerk, and that under no circumstances should he feel justified in making suggestions which might conflict with the wishes of Mrs. Hastings Warland.

But a few weeks after this reply, the gentleman himself appeared, and enquired for his nephew. It was long since they had met, yet each recognized the other. The elder also recognized the presence of a spirit he would find it hard to subdue. The first greetings were followed by some unimportant remarks, when the visitor invited his young relative to accompany him to a hotel, where they would neither interrupt others nor be themselves interrupted.

John readily obtained leave of absence, and

was going from the store when his employer said to him, "Remember your mother."

"Yes, sir, I will," was replied firmly.

He was not what his uncle had expected to find him. He was well dressed, well bred, and thoroughly self-possessed. There was no poverty to be relieved, no sluggish ambition to be stimulated. The nephew was master of the situation.

But Mr. Warland had come with a purpose; more as the agent of another than for himself. He had been entrusted with many verbal messages, which he faithfully delivered, and which were received with a courtesy of manner to which no exceptions could be taken, although they failed to elicit the desired response.

"Aunt Ermengarde and your cousins expect you to return with me," was said at length.

"They are very kind. I remember my cousins."

"And they remember you. Ermengarde is sure she should recognize you anywhere. She bade me tell you that you are doing wrong to hold yourself so aloof from the family to which you belong."

"First of all, I belong to my mother," now said the dutiful son. "I cannot be separated from her. All that I am which ranks me above a street-beggar I owe to my mother and her family. In your last letter to me you told me that I need expect nothing from you, sir."

"I know it, John. Your persistent refusals angered me. But let bygones go. Your mother has not the means to do for you what we would do."

"She can love me and help me to do my duty. What more do I need? I can earn money for myself. I want to be a merchant, and Mr. Archer will give me a chance to learn the business. I have seen the time when we almost starved. But now we have a pleasant home and kind friends."

"I would have prevented your starving, John. I offered to adopt you as my own son, and educate you. But your father refused the offer for you. Now, I am sure he would prefer that you should find a home with me."

"My father has nothing to do with me. I don't know that he is living. I don't wish to know. I have done all for him it was my

duty to do. My duty is now to my mother."

"What if you could do more for her by leaving her than by remaining with her? I will settle an annuity upon her; if you will go with me and consider yourself under my guardianship."

The hot blood surged to the young man's face, and the dark eyes flashed. His uncle hoped that at last his ambition was aroused. Judge, then, of this gentleman's surprise when, after a somewhat protracted silence, his nephew replied: "My mother needs no annuity from the Warland family, and I need no assistance. Uncle John, you oblige me to say what may seem disrespectful. Pardon me. There is too much of my father's character in me. I am trying to root it out, and I need all my mother's help. You would not have me such a man as the brother you disowned?"

This was not defiance. It was not disrespect. It was simply an assertion of personal dignity which could hardly be expected from one so young. It must be remembered, however, that the speaker had often revolved in his own mind the advantages and disadvan-

tages which might result from the arrangement now so forcibly brought to his consideration.

Mr. Warland replied angrily: "If I thought you would bring disgrace upon our family, I would not permit you to cross our threshold. Your father has brought shame enough upon us."

"Yes, sir. But it is not my fault that I am his son. It is my misfortune, not my fault. He has been my enemy. It is dreadful to say such things, but it is not half so dreadful as to feel them. I could not go with you, if I would. My mother is my legal guardian, and she would never consent to it. My father is a disgrace to me, but I am proud of my mother."

In a conversation with Mabel Pease, John Warland had expressed the hope that he might one day have an opportunity to say these very words to some member of the Warland family. It was so in keeping with what had preceded that it was heard with little surprise; and, were the whole truth revealed, it would appear that this chivalric defence of one whom he was bound to honor really raised the young man in his uncle's estimation.

A fruitless effort, indeed, was this visit, except as it gave the visitor a very definite idea of his brother's son. Aunt Ermengarde might catechise him as she pleased. Nephew John was worthy of consideration—one of whom the family had no reason to be ashamed.

"He might, at least, be civil," said his Cousin Ermengarde, who had listened with interest to the report made by her father.

"He *was* civil," replied Mr. Warland. "John is a gentleman in his manners; and I must do him the justice to say that I pushed him to extremities. You would know him for a Warland, but there is much of his mother about him. It is useless to expect to separate them; and, after all, it may be that he is right."

"He might visit us."

"Yes, he might do that, and I invited him to come here at any time. It is doubtful, however, if he accepts the invitation."

Aunt Ermengarde was seriously displeased. Her last hope had failed. She must submit. She remembered the beautiful woman her nephew had introduced to her as his wife, and to whom she had ever refused her sympathy.

Another trial was in store for the young man. Another letter was received, and this from a stranger, containing a brief description of his father's life during a period of nearly two years. This wretched life was drawing to a close, and at intervals the sufferer called for his son.

The letter was submitted first to Mabel Pease, and then to Mrs. Warland, with the question, "Shall I go, mother?"

"I wish you to do as your heart dictates," she replied. "You must decide for yourself."

"Then I shall go," he responded quickly.

He was too late. Hastings Warland had sunk rapidly at last, with no consciousness of the change which awaited him.

Mrs. Bennett welcomed his son, regarding the young man earnestly, as she said: "I trust you came here with the spirit of forgiveness in your heart. Your father was fearfully punished for his sins, and the living are freed from him. God will deal justly with him. For at least five generations the Warlands have been hard drinkers. There was some excuse for Hastings, bad as he was. I have notified his Aunt Ermengarde of

his death, and am waiting to hear from her."

This was a strange greeting. But the speaker was an aged woman, who had a right to speak plainly of the family she had so faithfully served. As death had but set its seal to the separation he had himself desired, John could not mourn the loss of his father. He might forgive; but, for his mother's sake, even more than his own, he rejoiced. Yet there was an inexpressible sadness in the thought that a life God-given had been so degraded and debased.

Mrs. Bennett hoped that Hastings Warland would be buried with his fathers, and in this she was not disappointed. Mr. Dearbon was desired to make all necessary preparations, and accompany the body until met by a brother of the deceased. The time and place of meeting were designated, so there could be no misunderstanding.

After much deliberation, John Warland decided to witness the burial of his father, and accordingly proceeded with Mr. Dearbon until met by his uncle. There was nothing of pomp or display connected with this funeral. The family vault was opened and the burial-

service read, with only the immediate relatives in attendance.

Under these circumstances the young man could not refuse to enter his uncle's house. Here he was welcomed cordially; kind enquiries were made for his mother, and every allusion which might lead to discussion or disagreement carefully avoided. Aunt Ermengarde pronounced herself satisfied with his appearance. Her namesake shared her admiration, and all were eager to adopt him as their very own.

Here was wealth, luxury, and elegance which he might share if he would. His uncle's wife was gracious and smiling, while his cousins insisted, with charming earnestness, that he must remain indefinitely.

"You must just stay, now, and be our brother," said the youngest. "We want a brother ever so much, and we want just you. We are going to Europe some time, and you could go with us. Of course papa would take you. Wouldn't you like to go?"

"I should like going to Europe very much."

"Well, and don't you like us?"

"Yes, Cousin Bess, I do like you."

Ermengarde, the eldest, said less than her sisters; yet even she condescended to plead the general cause.

At dinner the young man's principles and powers of resistance were put to the test. Wine was placed before him, and its use seemed so in accordance with the surroundings, that he was half tempted to drain the glass of its sparkling contents. He felt the force of a will other than his own constraining him, and he knew, if he yielded, he was lost. The flavor of the wine sipped in his early boyhood was not forgotten, and the dormant appetite for stimulants proved itself to be only biding its time.

"Remember your mother." The words were a talisman. He would not bring disgrace upon her and the dear old grandfather who, in a plain, country home, prayed for the boy who carried the burden of another's sins. He put aside the tempting cup, and, as he did so, his eyes met those of his Cousin Ermengarde.

"You will drink with me," she said smilingly.

"I cannot," he replied. "You must excuse me. I dare not."

"How now, sir knight? You should not thus refuse a lady."

"I would refuse my fair cousin no other service," he replied gallantly. "I am my father's son."

Something in his manner awed even the laughing girl. He was not one to trifle with a serious subject; and the question of abstinence or indulgence was to him most serious.

Later, alone with his Aunt Ermengarde, he was forced again to assert himself. She referred to her rapidly-accumulating wealth, and the fact that within a few years it must pass to other hands. Theirs was an old family, which she trusted would hold an honored place in the generations to come.

John was not especially interested. He listened with respectful attention, but his thoughts were with his mother, true-hearted and noble.

"Will nothing induce you to come and dwell with us?" at length asked the stately woman.

"I cannot come," was replied.

One question more: "If you were motherless, would you come to us then?"

"Pardon me, but I could not. I need to

learn self-restraint, and this is no place to learn that."

"Come here," said the lady, extending her hand.

He knelt at her feet, and with the small, white hand, upon which still flashed the diamond seal of betrothal and of marriage, she swept back the hair from his upturned brow.

"So you think this a place for self-indulgence?"

"It seems so to me, Aunt Ermengarde. I am afraid I should grow to be like my father here."

"Then God forbid that you should come. Your father was my favorite nephew, and you must not forget me. We cannot afford to lose you as we lost him."

John Warland resumed his seat. His hostess summoned a servant, and ordered wine to be brought. A slight hesitation caused the order to be repeated in a most peremptory tone, when it was obeyed and the attendant dismissed.

Mrs. Ermengarde Warland herself poured out the rich red wine, offering one glass to her companion, while she raised the other to her lips.

"Excuse me," said the young man, taking the glass from her hand, and replacing it upon the table. She seemed hardly to observe this. Indeed, she had no sooner drained one glass than she seized the other, and drank its contents eagerly.

Again they were filled, and again drained, while John looked on with strange surprise. Yet again, and he was about to remonstrate, when an elderly woman, whom he had not before seen, entered the room. Decanter and glasses were quickly removed without a word being spoken until the guest rose to leave.

"Good-evening, Aunt Ermengarde," he then said courteously.

In response, he heard but a muttered sound. The wine had taken effect. The possessor of an immense fortune, of which she had spoken so proudly; the mistress of a home adorned with all which wealth could command or taste suggest, was as absolutely intoxicated as her nephew had ever been. The woman with scanty garments and pinched, starved face, who spends her last penny for the fiery draught which makes her forget her poverty, is not more a slave to the demon of the still than was *this* woman, whose silken robe

trailed heavily upon the softest of carpets, and whose jewels were in themselves a dower of wealth.

No marvel that to her young relative all her pride of name and lineage seemed but mockery. No marvel that, in the light of this new revelation, he felt himself doubly cursed by the blood in his veins.

He longed to rush from the house, and was only restrained from doing this by its incivility. He spent the remainder of the evening with his cousins; but the charm of their society was broken. He was thankful when the hour arrived for his departure the following morning, and hailed with delight each waymark on his homeward journey.

"O mother! I never knew before how much I owe to you," he exclaimed, as he embraced her with demonstrative affection. "I would live in a garret with you, rather than in a palace with any other of my name. Mother, I wish our names were changed." And having said this, he burst into tears.

"Are you sorry you went to your uncle's?" she asked after the lapse of some minutes.

"No, mother," he answered, stifling his sobs. "It was better that I should see both

sides of the picture. I don't blame my father so much now. The love of the poison stuff must have been born with him. Mother! mother! it is dreadful. Why, even Aunt Ermengarde is a drunkard."

Few knew this save her attendants, who were bribed to conceal the fact, and as much as possible avert its consequences. It was not often that she could, by any artifice, obtain the means of immoderate indulgence. Her pride was her safeguard against public exhibitions of her weakness. Others, equally high born and delicately bred as herself, might condescend to enter places of common resort, and there drink to intoxication. But she would not do this. To a certain extent she submitted to the restraint imposed upon her in this matter; yet, despite all, she would sometimes reach a state of beastly intoxication.

Her life had been darkened by a fearful sorrow. She lacked the stimulus of necessity in applying herself to any pursuit. From taking wine socially and as a prescribed tonic, it was easy for one with her boasted ancestry to acquire the habit of shameful indulgence.

Mrs. Bennett had not suspected this infirm-

ity on the part of her former mistress; and it would not have been revealed to the nephew had not an unusually protracted abstinence made the demands of appetite too importunate to be resisted.

Had she been alone, no wine would have been brought to her. Having a guest, her order was obeyed and her weakness exposed.

CHAPTER XIX.

MAKING AMENDS.

AMONG the legal firms of the city appeared, not new names, but old names in new relations. Horace Hilton and Winthrop Hayes formed a copartnership for the transaction of all business connected with their profession. It was a strong combination of talent and industry, each supplementing the other, and both worthy of confidence.

Winthrop Hayes had taken the last decisive step towards complete success—a step at which those who knew him best wondered still more than at the sudden reform of his habits. From the moment he entered Horace Hilton's office he had ever present with him the example of a consistent Christian; and often reminded as he was of his entire dependence upon God, he came at length to recognize the grand truth that from God comes every good and perfect gift.

He had not been religiously educated. Neither was he a sceptic. Perhaps it would be too much to say that he had never thought of his relations to the Creator of the universe; but so far as his conduct was a manifestation of his thoughts, these relations were utterly ignored. He was one of a large class of men who pride themselves upon their superiority to the prejudices and superstitions of ordinary minds; and, with far less of consideration than they would give to the merits of a new opera, dismiss the momentous questions upon which depend their eternal interests.

His reticence was so great that not even Mr. Hilton suspected the mental conflict which for months held him in a state of unrest and disquiet. If he could have avoided this conflict, he would have done so gladly. If he could have silenced the voice of conscience, he would have counted himself happy. He could do neither. There remained but the alternative of unconditional surrender to the authority which claimed his allegiance. With many a struggle, his false pride and self-sufficiency yielded; and, like a child, he was ready to confess his sins and ask forgiveness. Then, new-born, rejoicing in the peace and gladness

which had come to him, it was no cross to assume the vows which bound him to a life-long service of the Divine Master.

Mrs. Archer would not express her secret thoughts, as she sat among the congregation which witnessed the avowal of her nephew's faith; yet she felt that he had gone quite too far in what was really praiseworthy. He might have lived well enough without making himself so conspicuous. It was quite the proper thing for Horace Hilton, whose whole character was in keeping with pronounced creeds; but for one like Winthrop Hayes so to bind himself seemed unnatural.

Not long after this event, which occurred within a few days of the announcement of the new legal firm, Mrs. Waters was spending an hour with Mabel Pease, when she said with some hesitation: "I suppose your friends may expect soon to congratulate you."

"Congratulate me! Why?"

"Pardon me, if I seem intrusive," responded the visitor to these exclamations. "We expect to congratulate you upon your approaching marriage."

"There is no occasion for such congratulations," said Mabel decidedly.

"Are you offended with me?" asked Mrs. Waters.

"By no means," replied her friend. "I should be often offended, if such a trifle could annoy me. I am under no engagement of marriage, and, so far as I know, am likely to remain Mabel Pease to the end of the chapter."

"But I supposed—I have been told—everybody thinks—"

"Well, Mrs. Waters, do please complete your sentences. My curiosity is excited, and I promise to absolve you for all offences."

"Then may I tell you frankly?"

"Certainly. My friends are accustomed to talk plainly to me, and I in turn talk plainly to them."

"Well, then, Miss Pease, it has been generally understood that Mr. Hayes was on probation; and that, if he relinquished his habits of dissipation, and proved himself worthy of you, you would accept him as your husband. Now that he has won the respect of the community, both for his talents and the strength of his moral purpose, I supposed your marriage would follow as a matter of course."

"I thank you for telling me this, Mrs. Wa-

ters. At the same time, I assure you that it is utterly false. No one has rejoiced more heartily than I in the changed position and prospects of Mr. Hayes; and my heart was filled with thankfulness when he came forward as a Christian. But there was never any engagement of marriage between us. If he has been on probation, it is not to me that he must give account. If I had any influence in effecting his reform, it was in the same way I have tried to reform others; and except as we had been thrown much together at Mr. Archer's, I had no reason to count upon *him* more than upon others. For his sake I regret the misunderstanding. Were it true that our marriage depended upon his reform, the fact would never have transpired. My lips would have been sealed. Do Mr. Hayes the justice to believe that *in* himself and *for* himself he cast aside the past, and reached forward to a future of grand endeavor. He has proved himself worthy of respect, and I am glad to number him among my friends."

Mrs. Waters's brother hesitated to congratulate his partner upon what he supposed to be an assured fact. Winthrop Hayes allowed no one to intrude upon his privacy, and Mr. Hil-

ton was too thoroughly a gentleman to seek the confidence which was not freely given. Appearances seemed to corroborate the reports he had heard, and he regarded Miss Pease as the future wife of his friend and associate.

His acquaintance with the young lady had been confined to the day at the sea-shore and an occasional call at her own house. His sister said he was too much engrossed in business to care for society. She complained that he visited her so little; but his mother had no reason to complain of his neglect. Since his dying father said to him, "Horace, be good to your mother," she had been his especial care.

She was not a woman of culture, in the ordinary acceptation of that term. Yet she had a large, loving heart, and an intellect which needed only the discipline of study to have placed her in the front rank of scholarship. In her younger days she hardly thought of what was thus denied her. Now she realized in her son all which she herself might have been, nor grudged the dower she had bestowed upon him.

Winthrop Hayes first saw her soon after he entered the office as a worker, and, contrasting

her with many of the women he had met in fashionable society, did not wonder that her children regarded her with something like reverence.

She was not aged or broken in health, notwithstanding so much of her life had been spent in hard labor. But a score of years the senior of Horace, her eldest child, she might, at the age of fifty-two, be mistaken for his sister. She had toiled for him. He delighted to surround her with comforts and luxuries to which she had before been unused. It was no longer necessary that she should deny herself the privileges of leisure.

"I cannot have my children ashamed of me," she once said when a friend expressed surprise that she should attempt the perusal of some voluminous work. "It was always a treat to me when I could get away by myself, and read some interesting book. Now, when books are all around me, and I have the time on my hands, I cannot help reading."

Hugh Waters was proud to call her mother; and few who saw her failed to recognize the inherent nobility of her nature. With her, her son could hardly be lonely, even after his sister had left them.

For himself, if he dreamed of the time when a younger woman would sit beside him, and, looking into his face, read there the confirmation of a love which was to her a crown of rejoicing, he bided his time without sign or utterance. His habits of close application had not detracted from his social qualities; although as yet these qualities were appreciated by comparatively few.

There were poor women who blessed his name; young men who thanked God for such a friend; and children who sprang eagerly to meet him whenever they heard the sound of his footsteps. He was strong and courageous. His faith never faltered; and to those whom he sought to benefit he imparted something of his own brave spirit.

Jeff Moulton was a stranger, yet none the less was he interested in the unfortunate man. When consulted by his partner, he said at once that a place must be found where congenial labor would give exercise for the body, and furnish a stimulus to healthy thought. How this situation could be gained was the question under consideration, when Mr. Truman appeared, and offered Jeff Moulton a position at once lucrative and responsible.

"I shall expect you to do well," he said confidently. "I know you have been unfortunate. But there is plenty of time for you to redeem your fortune and your reputation. Most of us have been doing wrong in drinking wine, and the best we can do now is to reform. *I* have signed a pledge of total abstinence, and I hope you are ready to do the same."

"I have broken one pledge," was the reply.

"I know about that, Moulton. Clara has confessed all to me, and she knows that she was more in fault than you. You were strongly tempted. My Clara could persuade *me* to almost anything. I don't think there is another person in the world who could have persuaded me to sign such a straight-out pledge as she drew up. She says I must make amends forher fault."

"Thank you, Mr. Truman. But I was myself to blame. No ordinary temptation could have made me break my pledge; but a man ought to resist *all* temptations. I am ready to renew the pledge, and, God helping me, I will keep it to the end."

People wondered that one who had fallen so low could so soon regain firm standing.

Foster Truman thought his father had acted most unwisely, and expressed his opinion with unequivocal frankness.

"I never heard any one question Moulton's ability or honesty," remarked Mr. Truman when the subject was under discussion.

"Neither did I," was replied. "Yet everybody knows that a man who drinks to excess is never reliable."

"What is excess, Foster? How much may a man drink with safety? How much may a man drink for his own best good and the good of those who love him?"

"That depends upon circumstances," hesitatingly replied the young man. "Each one must judge for himself."

"How much can *you* drink, Foster?" An angry flush gave token of the spirit which had been aroused; when the father added firmly, "I have a right to ask you that question. There is no one who loves you better than I do, my son; no one who is a truer friend to you. *I* have been wrong. It seems to me, now that my eyes are open, we have all been wrong. Would you be willing that Clara should drink as much wine from day to day as you drink? Would you marry a young lady with no purer

record than you could show were your private life fully revealed? How much better are you than Moulton?"

Sharp, incisive questions were these, asked not one hour too soon, and answered by silence rather than words. Yet as often as conscience repeated them, so often was Foster Truman brought face to face with unforgotten, secret sins. The pledge was constantly before him. It was the theme of conversation at home and abroad, until at length, "in sheer desperation," as he laughingly said, he added his name to "the sacred list." For this worthy act he received due credit when next he saw Winnie Lawton, who expressed her pleasure so heartily that he ventured to ask her lifelong assistance in keeping the pledge he had taken.

The two-score names now enrolled represented only so many individuals—few indeed, compared with the throng which stayed not to count the cost of their indulgence. Families would continue to transmit the hereditary curse, and one generation after another be hurried to untimely and dishonored graves. But if here and there one could be found to enlist on the side of purity, much would be

gained. If from some homes the tempter could be banished, there might be an immense gain to the world. It is thus reforms are carried; and thus, if at all, the great mass of mankind will be redeemed from the thraldom of sin.

The example of one earnest worker will inspire others. The words of one earnest speaker will thrill the hearts of those who listen, and so call forth responsive words. One woman cannot do much alone, but one woman can attract others, who, sharing her spirit, can each in turn attract other workers, and so the circle widens until it reaches the outermost verge of society.

Mabel Pease was doing what she could in a quiet way; and so long as John Warland and his mother shared her home, she was not likely to relax her efforts in the good cause. A sorrowful look or a chance expression would remind her of all the past, and challenge her to renewed interest. John confided to her his troubles, speaking even more freely than to his mother of his visit to the old family mansion. From her he did not care to conceal the fact that the luxury and elegance there seen had appealed strongly to his natu-

ral tastes, and that his own instincts had warned him he was treading upon dangerous ground.

"I don't wonder so much that my father was a drunkard," he once said. "I only wonder how any one can drink moderately year after year. I could not do it. I should never know where to stop."

"You must stop before you begin. There are thousands, and perhaps millions, in the same condition that you are. It is said that there are few drunkards in the present generation whose parents did not use alcoholic drinks more or less immoderately. The next generation must bear the sins of the present, until somewhere humanity marshals its forces to regain what has been lost. You must fight a good fight, John, and so come off conqueror."

"I am trying," he replied in a discouraged tone. "But the enemy is always at hand. I can never be off my guard. It is dreadful."

"Why is it dreadful?" asked Mabel cheerfully. "It is not such a dreadful thing that sin must be punished. You are only not to touch or taste the poison stuff; and this abstinence is the only *positive* safety for any one. You are morbid about this."

"Perhaps I am, Cousin Mabel. But you wouldn't wonder at that, if you had the Warland blood in your veins. I never quite realized my misfortune until I saw Aunt Ermengarde drink six glasses of wine, hardly stopping to take breath. I wish I could change my name," added John passionately. "I wish it was Bedlow instead of Warland. Raleigh is such a splendid fellow. Don't you think he is handsome, Cousin Mabel?"

"I do; and just now I would give a great deal for the sight of his bright, handsome face. I think I must make a visit to the old farm. Your mother and you can keep the fires burning here while I go there. If our cousins are too busy to come to us, we must go to them."

CHAPTER XX.

NOT A PRIMA DONNA.

HASTINGS WARLAND had been dead two months when Mabel Pease entered the then untenanted cottage he had once called home. The desolate rooms offered accommodations for a family of moderate size. Outside, the trees stood like sentinels, grim and tall, waiting for the command to unfurl their myriads of tiny banners. When a few more suns should lighten and brighten, the grass would be upspringing, while buds would unfold, and the whole landscape glow with beauty.

In the large cities there were families starving in crowded tenement-houses; children growing up with never a sight of green fields or lavish wealth of flowers. From the tens of thousands one family would not be missed;

yet this was no reason why comfort and happiness should be denied to the one.

This visit of Mabel Pease to her friends was not merely one of pleasure. She had a plan to propose which she hoped would prove acceptable to those most interested. She first consulted Grandfather Bedlow. Raleigh was to be educated. Another man could take his place on the farm; but no other could take his place in the world of intellect and culture.

"I've seen it all along," said the old man when Mabel paused for a reply to her words. "I've seen it," he repeated. "I always knew the boy was a good scholar. So was his father before him. I an't going to stand in his way. I've most done; and if it's best for Raleigh to leave the old farm, I sha'n't hold him back. He's a good boy."

"Yes, grandfather, and he is a great deal more than a good boy. There is the making of a grand man in that well-shaped head of his."

"Yes, child, I see it all. Oliver took after his mother more than he did after me, and Raleigh's like him. My wife could always see things quicker'n I could, and I depended

on her. Raleigh's got a good many of her ways—more than any of the others have; and perhaps that's what makes him seem so near to me. If he can do better than to stay here, I want him to. But, Mabel, you'll be doing too much to furnish him with money."

"Aunt Martha's money is to be his portion," was the quick reply. "That was invested by itself, and Mr. Archer managed it so well that it has more than doubled. The income will be sufficient for Raleigh's expenses, and I am sure Aunt Martha would like to have it spent in that way. Then you know, as I told you, I have a family to occupy the cottage, and the boys of the family will soon be able to do the farm-work. Raleigh can find time to look after them and oversee things generally. I am sure he can do that without interfering with his studies."

"The boy finds time for most everything," responded his grandfather. "Last winter folks said he kept the best school there was in town; and, besides that, he kept the work right along here at home. Then he studied, seemed to me, pretty much all the time evenings. Them books you sent him were all read through; and some way the rest of us

got interested in them. You and Raleigh can settle the matter just as you think best. I sha'n't live to see it; but if he makes a great scholar, I hope he'll do good according to his learning. You've done a good work for us all, Mabel. God bless you!"

The old man leaned his head upon his cane, and closed his eyes, when Mabel Pease went out softly, leaving him with God and his own thoughts.

Mrs. Bedlow said even less than had her father in regard to the proposed arrangement. She was willing to abide the decision of her son. Raleigh, who was enjoined to silence until he had heard every detail of the plan, so far as it could be perfected without his co-operation, listened with varying emotions. "Can I speak now?" he asked, as his cousin acknowledged that she could go no further.

"Yes, if you speak rightly," she replied. "Don't refuse Aunt Martha's money. It will be one of the greatest disappointments of my life, if you do. I know you would be a happier man for being educated."

"I know I should," he answered quickly. "I have intended to be an educated man. But I expected to get my education at odd

times. I could do it, and still keep things along here at home. Yet I should be thankful to take a regular course at school and in college. I must talk with grandfather and mother before I can say more than this, except to tell you that I fully appreciate your kindness."

After consulting these two, he was able to speak decidedly. He would accept such assistance as was necessary, with the understanding that the full amount, with interest, should be repaid at some future time. Meanwhile, he was to depend upon himself so far as possible. Mabel objected to these conditions; but, finding that she could not set them aside, submitted with the best grace she could command, and proceeded to carry out her own part of the programme.

Mrs. Warland, who from the first had lent her assistance, superintended the removal of the family which was to occupy the little cottage. There was a widowed mother from one of the rural districts of England, with three sturdy boys, and a baby girl as sweet and, winsome as ever reigned the queen of a household. This family had been found living, or rather starving, in a damp, unhealthy cellar; and

after having once visited them, Miss Pease did not relax in her efforts to do them good until she saw them settled in her country home.

The children shouted for joy. The boys were ready for whatever work might offer, if they could only breathe the pure, fresh air, and look out upon the verdant landscape. Mrs. Hathway said she could take a turn in the field when work crowded, so Raleigh would need to look no further for help.

Old Dr. Saunders came over as soon as he knew of Mabel's arrival. She was a favorite of his, and, moreover, he wished to enquire particularly for Mrs. Warland and her son.

"Things have turned out all right," he said heartily. "When the Lord took Hastings Warland out of the world, I knew Jane would feel as though she was really free. Now, if John does well—and I believe he will—the best of her life is to come."

"I think it may be so," replied her friend. "She is very cheerful. It seems to me that she grows younger every day. I am sure that she is handsomer than she was six months ago. John is in love with her."

"That is a blessed thing for them both. It

will save John, and make up to his mother for a good deal she has lost."

The doctor's second visit was made after he had heard of Raleigh's changed prospects. "Glad of it, my boy! Glad of it!" he exclaimed. "Your grandfather and I shall live to congratulate you. I never thought as you could be spared from home. But we old folks don't always know. Ah! neighbor Bedlow, we shall have to quicken our steps, if we're going to keep up with the youngsters. I tell George sometimes, that, old as he is, he goes so fast I most lose sight of him. We're expecting George to come home for a day or two pretty soon. His mother wants to see him, and he always comes when she writes for him, if he can possibly leave his patients."

George Saunders was a dutiful, affectionate son; more considerate, perhaps, of his mother than he would have been had wife and children divided his attention. He came, as his father expected, and, by invitation, visited his old friend, Mr. Bedlow. Mabel was glad to meet him again, finding him even more agreeable than in their first unceremonious interview. When they parted, he had received a cordial assurance of welcome to her own home.

With the long summer days came Mrs. Warland and her son to her father's house. To that father she was almost the very same she had been in the old, old days. Her musical laugh was often heard with scarce an undertone of sadness. She sang the very songs of her girlhood.

"Jane is young again," said good Dr. Saunders to his friend, as they watched her coming from the field, rake in hand, her beautiful face flushed with the exercise she had so much enjoyed.

"It does my old eyes good to see her so happy," responded her father. "John is a good boy too. I am almost done worrying about him. Raleigh says there's no need of it, and Raleigh knows. It's hard for me to let that boy go, doctor. He's the very light of my eyes. But the Hathway boys do well on the farm, and I'm going to trust for the future. The way we've been led the last three years is wonderful."

"God's ways are past finding out. It's hard sometimes to submit; but you and I, friend Bedlow, have had just the discipline we needed."

"Yes, yes, I know it, and may be there's

more to come. But if it please God, I pray it may come in some other way than through the ruin of any of my family. We're going to have them all here before Jane goes back. I expect some of them will blame Raleigh for thinking of going away from home; but he won't mind it."

No more did he. He was able to defend himself and make good his promises that the old farm should not suffer from neglect. Mrs. Hathway and her children were ready to assist him in every possible manner. The woman had a practical knowledge of dairy-farming, and ventured to make some suggestions which commended themselves as worthy of consideration. Accustomed to frugal living, she utilized many things which had been considered useless; and, altogether, she was a valuable acquisition to the Bedlows.

Mabel Pease was gratified with the success of her plan thus far. Often disappointed, as one must be who seeks the good of others, here was compensation for many failures.

Half-mockingly Mrs. Archer sometimes addressed her as an "odd philanthropist"; yet this lady knew that, with each year, she became more attractive and more worthy of re-

spect. She was able to choose her friends, and she chose them wisely. Mrs. Warland was a companion of whom she never tired. John was intelligent, ambitious, and reliable.

From the young Italian girl, whose expenses she in part defrayed, were received the most favorable reports. Tessa had won the love of her teachers and associates; and as she was happy in her new home, she remained there two years before visiting the city where she had been a street-singer.

Miss Pease had seen her during this time, but to her other friends she was quite a stranger. Her dark, liquid eyes and musical voice were the same which had attracted Winthrop Hayes when he beckoned her to his window to receive his careless gifts. But she was no longer a child. She was a woman, with sweet, womanly grace—a *beautiful* woman, all unconscious of the spell her beauty might weave.

Her dark, sad experience had early developed the strongest emotions of her nature. She realized her obligations to those who had so kindly cared for her, and resolved no longer to depend upon others for her daily bread. She could provide for herself, as she said al-

most passionately when conversing with her hostess. "Don't try to persuade me, Miss Pease," she added. "I cannot longer live upon the bounty of my friends."

Mrs. Maitland exclaimed in surprise at sight of Tessa, who presented herself unannounced in the familiar rooms. The children of this family, too, had changed. But they had not kept pace with her in mental development; and only when she sang, could they realize that she was the poor Italian girl who had come to them starving and friendless.

To the kind woman who had cared for her in those terrible days she now told all her perplexities and resolves. She had already learned so much, that Miss Dennen would give her board and tuition for teaching some young children who came to the house as day scholars. Besides, a gentleman, who had heard her sing, assured her that she might earn a good salary by singing in church. She had taken some lessons on the piano, and wished now to obtain a thorough musical education.

Mrs. Maitland listened to all this. But what could she do? She had been wise in caring for the child. She hardly comprehended the needs of the young lady. She did appreciate,

however, the natural longing for fatherland when Tessa said, "If I can learn so that I can sing anywhere, I can see dear Italy again."

This young lady had been invited to spend a vacation in the home of Mabel Pease, where others interested could meet her, and where she was a most welcome guest.

Mrs. Waters found it difficult to refrain from expressing her admiration of the beautiful girl, who was introduced to her as Miss Gavazzi. From this interview she went to her mother's, and there repaid herself for previous silence. Mrs. Hilton listened to her rhapsody with an amused smile until, when an assertion seemed entirely extravagant, she uttered a word of remonstrance.

"I only wish you could see her," was the reply. "If she doesn't go back to school, you might invite her here to spend a few weeks with you, unless you are afraid Horace will fall in love with her."

"I should have no fears of that," said the mother confidently. "I trust he is too sensible to be captivated by a pretty face. But I will see Tessa for myself. She may not seem to me as she does to you."

"After you have seen her, you will never

think of calling her *pretty*. That adjective does not describe her face at all."

It needed but a glance to confirm this statement. Mrs. Hilton acknowledged that her daughter had spoken advisedly, and, had she been questioned, she must have pleaded guilty to being herself captivated.

Tessa Gavazzi soon made an engagement to sing for a few Sabbaths, at a rate of compensation which would once have seemed to her munificent. But this was only temporary, and she had need of much practice under skilled masters, if she would attain the position she coveted.

Her friends agreed with her in thinking that her future life lay clearly defined before her; that one career was open to her; and that to excel in this should be her first, grand object. There was not a dissenting voice. Mrs. Hilton said there was no mistaking the leadings of Providence in her case. Winthrop Hayes, who had been absent from the city for several days, alone remained to be consulted; but no one doubted that he would coincide with the opinions of others, and give himself no further trouble in the matter.

At length he returned, and, before seeing

Tessa, listened while she sang a familiar air which had been a favorite in his idle days. The song ceased, and he entered the room, where the singer was sitting at the piano. He pronounced her name. She sprang to her feet, responding to his call, as she had been wont to do when he seemed to her an angel of mercy. She was very grateful. He was fascinated. Here was one who regarded him as faultless.

He did not seek to entertain her. He only cared to hear the music of her voice. When Mrs. Warland and Miss Pease came in, he exerted himself to appear as usual; but it was evident that his thoughts were wholly given to the young Italian girl.

He had left, and Tessa had retired, when Mrs. Warland said: "Our plans will be defeated. Mr. Hayes will object to a new prima donna."

"Why?" asked Mabel. "*I* think he will second our plans. I am sure he is pleased with Tessa."

"And therefore I think he will object to her coming before the public as a singer. But I may be mistaken. We shall see."

"Why, mother, you don't think Tessa

would marry such an old man," now exclaimed John, who was quick to divine the meaning of the words just spoken. "Mr. Hayes is old enough to be her father."

"He would have been a very young father," was the reply. "Mr. Hayes is an attractive man."

"And people say he is to marry Cousin Mabel."

"Which you know is not true, John."

Mrs. Warland may have had an object in thus speaking; and events soon proved that she had judged aright. Winthrop Hayes thought Tessa should be educated as other young ladies were educated, and proposed to convince her of the propriety of this. If he found her obstinately bent upon a public career, he would then withdraw his objections, and do what he could to assist her.

He had no intention of playing the part of a lover. But the interview he sought was decisive; and when he found that one so pure and beautiful would gladly give her life into his keeping, he did not regret the passionate avowal of a love he had before hardly suspected. In her simplicity, Tessa did not care that she should now be wholly dependent up-

on him. Her ambitious dreams faded. She was content to be and do what he desired.

Mr. Hayes did not leave to her the task of announcing this change in her prospects. He went first to Mabel Pease, and, by her ready tact, was relieved of all embarrassment, as she said cordially: "I congratulate you. I shall congratulate her also; and you both have my best wishes for your happiness. She will make a noble woman, and you are worthy of her."

"But for you I should not have been worthy," he answered. "I believe, Mabel, that there was not another person in the world who would have set my sins before me as you did, and I thank you for it a thousand times. Then you have given me the support of your friendship, and that has been a treasure to me. But I have never been so conceited as to suppose that you would change a decision you assured me was final."

"The decision was as wise for you as for me," she replied with characteristic frankness. "My opinions are my heritage, and I cannot yield them. Tessa will worship you, and you will count her happiness above your own."

CHAPTER XXI.

THREE WEDDINGS.

PEOPLE had thought Dr. George Saunders so wedded to his profession that he would care for no other ties. But, to the surprise of his numerous friends, he married a beautiful woman, and brought her to preside over his home.

Many were familiar with her name, and a few knew something of her history; yet not one could know how much of happiness this marriage promised. In the old home were pronounced the vows which linked together two lives an untoward fate had widely sundered.

The bridegroom had bated not one jot of manly dignity in claiming the hand which had once been refused him. The bride had sacrificed nothing of womanly delicacy in responding to a sentiment which was but half revealed until her favor won its frank avowal.

John was the first to congratulate his mother, and his heart leaped for joy when Dr. Saunders addressed him as "my son." This placed him in a new position. He was to find a new home and new employment.

Mabel Pease was left with the entire charge of her house, and now Mrs. Archer hoped that her nephew would be settled in life. Knowing from the lips of the young lady herself that Mabel was under no engagement of marriage, and feeling sure that the two were in sympathy upon all matters of principle, the scheming aunt could see no obstacle to the accomplishment of her desires. But here again she was doomed to disappointment when Winthrop Hayes told her of his engagement to another.

"Who is she? Who is her father? How did you become acquainted with her?" These questions were asked in a breath, as curiosity was for a time in the ascendant.

"She is an orphan, and I first saw her in the street," was replied.

"Is she rich?"

"Not rich in money."

"How do you expect to live?"

"Upon what I can earn, and the income of

what little property I have. That will be sufficient for us."

"How much of an establishment will that support?"

"Not much. But we shall not care for much. I have bought a small house, and paid for it. I am accustomed to narrow quarters, and my wife will be satisfied to live according to my means. Then, you know, I have no extravagant habits to support."

"Why have I not heard of this before?" asked Mrs. Archer.

"Because it did not seem best for me to talk much about it until there was some occasion."

"And Mabel. What is she to do?"

"Whatever she pleases, as usual," was the laughing reply to this strange question. "She has no need of sympathy. She may choose to live as did her Aunt Martha, whom she so much admires. Trust Mabel Pease for a happy and useful life."

"Does she know of your engagement?"

"She has known it from the first."

"For mercy's sake, Winthrop, don't tell me you are going to marry that Italian beggar."

This was too much. The gentleman an-

swered sternly: "My wife will be no beggar for favor or for money. I love Tessa Gavazzi as I never loved another, and, such as she is, I thank God that she is willing to be my wife. I hope you will learn to love her," he added gently.

"It will not matter to you. You can live without me. You have a right to do as you please; but you have sadly disappointed me."

Following this announcement and disappointment, Mrs. Archer remained at home for several days upon the plea of indisposition. A physician was summoned, who ordered stimulants and tonics; while the servants whispered among themselves that the mistress had quite enough of wine before.

No one could be more astonished than was Horace Hilton when his partner told him that Tessa Gavazzi would soon be Mrs. Winthrop Hayes. He did not say, "And Mabel; what will she do?" But his thoughts turned to her involuntarily, and he congratulated his friend with even more warmth than the occasion seemed to demand.

The next evening he spent with Miss Pease, and, judging from the frequency of his sub-

sequent calls, he must have found a new charm in her society. Jenny Bedlow, who was with her cousin, guessed the secret, and clapped her hands gleefully at the prospect of another wedding, before those most interested had decided that there would be a wedding.

So the days went drifting by, until June brought again Grandfather Bedlow's family around him; Mabel with the others, and as cordially welcomed as any. Then how much there was to tell and hear! Raleigh had fulfilled the most sanguine expectations of his friends. The farm had not suffered. He had prosecuted his studies advantageously, and was certain he could continue as he had commenced.

More company was expected. Mr. Hilton found it convenient to spend his vacation in the country, and was received as a friend. The circle of relatives and friends widened, and still there was room.

The young student felt a new inspiration in the presence of the man who had made his own way in the world, unaided by patronage or money which he had not earned. What another had done Raleigh Bedlow could do. Then it might be that, in assuming new rela-

tions, Cousin Mabel would find herself somewhat restricted in the expenditure of her property. From a few carefully-uttered words Mabel divined this thought, and hastened to set the matter right.

"My property seems to be a troublesome appendage," she said with a smile. "Mr. Hilton declines assuming the care of it, and I am not certain but he wishes I had not a dollar."

"Not quite that," remarked the gentleman, who, unknown to the speakers, had heard their conversation. "Excuse me. I did not intend to play the part of a listener, but, the door being ajar, I needs must hear. I would not deprive any one of the pleasure of doing good; and money is a wondrous power for weal or woe. Yet it was never my ambition to marry an heiress."

More he did not choose to say. With a smile, a bow, and a graceful wave of the hand, he walked away, leaving the cousins to themselves.

Horace Hilton could not ask Mabel Pease to leave the house she had arranged and beautified with her own hands to accept a home with himself and his mother. This home had

seemed luxurious to its occupants when first they found themselves established within its four walls; and here the mother chose to spend her life.

Had there been less of true love between the parties, it is probable that the discussions upon this point would have resulted unhappily. As it was, there could be no positive disagreement, although differing opinions were firmly maintained. The lady insisted that her lover should share with her the home she had established, yet assured him, with unaffected sincerity, that, did circumstances demand it, she could live happily with him in the humblest cottage.

"It is the severest trial to which my pride and independence have ever been subjected; yet I yield to you what I would yield to no one else," he said gently; and thus the question was settled.

Mabel remained at Mr. Bedlow's, after the other guests had departed, until within a few days of the event which was to seal her life's destiny. Only the nearest and dearest friends of the bride and bridegroom were invited to witness the wedding ceremony. Then followed a hasty leave-taking, and the happy

couple started on a journey of several weeks.

Winthrop Hayes remained in the office doing the work of two men, and solacing himself as best he could with anticipations of his own marriage. Mr. Archer often visited him, pleading sometimes as an excuse that home was lonely, and that a man at sixty was too old to enjoy fashionable parties. Then, too, he missed Mabel, who seemed to him almost like a daughter, and who always had a cozy corner for him in her pleasantest room.

"I suppose you don't envy Hilton?" said this gentleman during one of his visits.

"I certainly do not," was the quick response. "He deserves just such a woman as Mabel, and she deserves just such a man as he is. I think they understand each other. She will trust him entirely, and he will never trench upon her individuality. Her life could never be absorbed by another, and he will love her all the more for having some resources of happiness apart from him."

"He is very different from you, Winthrop."

"Yes, sir, I am a selfish fellow at the best. I don't believe I shall be an unkind husband.

I should hate myself, if I thought there was a possibility of that; yet I must confess that I would rather my wife should find all her happiness in me and my interests."

"I know you would, and there are many men who have the same feeling. But such men are not always the best husbands. They usually give far less than they receive, and demand as their right many things they should regard as favors. I once said I should pity the woman who sacrificed herself upon the altar of your selfishness. Now I am not at all inclined to pity Tessa. The change in you has been almost miraculous."

"It was a very simple miracle," replied Winthrop Hayes. "I don't wonder that you talked of the altar of my selfishness. Neither do I wonder that you have some fears for the happiness of my future wife. But Tessa is more to me than any other could be. My aunt does not approve my choice. Some time I hope she will."

"I hope so," echoed Mr. Archer with a sigh. "Your aunt says you seldom visit her. She complains of your neglect."

"I have no intention to neglect her. I regard her no less than when I spent so much

of my time with her. I called yesterday, but Mary said she was lying down."

"Winthrop, I don't know as I ought to tell you; but I must tell some one, and there is nobody else. I wish you had insisted upon seeing your aunt yesterday. Have you ever thought—have you ever suspected—I can't say it," added the speaker, shading his face with his hand.

"Is it possible that my aunt is ever intoxicated with wine?" asked the younger man. "I have thought of it, but I dismissed the thought as an insult to her, and fancied that my senses had deceived me."

"*I* cannot be deceived in the matter. When you called yesterday, she was probably under the influence of wine. Her health is not good, and she insists that she cannot live without stimulants; but I know that the gratification of appetite is the ruling motive. I have reasoned with her, and entreated her to give up the habit. If commands would effect anything, I should command her, much as I despise the idea of a husband exercising authority over his wife. When I think I have removed every drop of wine from the house, she finds a way to obtain it. I cannot stoop to

talk to the servants about it. I don't think she has ever drunk to excess in public ; but unless she reforms, she will soon lose all self-control. Tell me what to do, Winthrop."

"I don't know," was the reply. "You have my sympathy, and I will help you if I can. Five years ago no one could have made me believe that you would ever need my sympathy for such a cause. When I realized the necessity of a reform in my own habits, and knew there was no hope for me except in total abstinence, I was not ready to denounce fashionable wine-drinking as a curse. I was sure that the majority of men and women could drain their glasses in brilliantly-lighted rooms without fear of danger. Since then I have changed my mind. There is but a step between moderate drinking and unlimited indulgence, and that step is often taken unconsciously. I am not going to say that drinking a glass of wine is in itself a sin, yet I *do* say that conditions and circumstances may *make* it a sin, and the drinker be responsible for results of which he never dreamed."

"Another consideration," rejoined Mr. Archer. "The drinker may at any time change his habits, but he can never hope to destroy

the evil effects of his example and influence. I have been guilty in this matter. Happy the man or woman who has not."

Long after he was left alone, Winthrop Hayes sat debating with himself what could be done to save an honored name from disgrace. He might appeal to his aunt; but she would probably regard the appeal as an impertinence, and go on in her chosen way. He was unable to reach any satisfactory conclusion, and it was not until after his partner's return that he found an opportunity to call upon Mrs. Archer.

She was then confined to her bed by actual sickness, and declined seeing him. He went directly to Mabel, whom he had not yet learned to address by her new name. Here it was not necessary that he should betray the confidence which had been reposed in him. His aunt's unfortunate habits were already known to Mrs. Hilton.

"I have been aware of it for several months, but I have never spoken of it to any one," she said in a low tone.

"And you have done nothing?"

"What could I do? Mrs. Archer considers me a fanatic. She would not listen to me,

even should I presume to remonstrate with her. If she should be seriously ill, there might be some hope for her, provided her physician was not a believer in alcoholic remedies."

"If that is the only hope, then she is doomed," was the reply.

But this was not absolutely certain, although her nephew might well be pardoned for so believing. The illness, which from the first had resisted ordinary treatment, was at length pronounced dangerous; and, providentially as it seemed, upon the very day this decision was reached, Dr. George Saunders came with his wife to visit Mr. and Mrs. Hilton. He was invited to meet in consultation with Mrs. Archer's physician. His reputation entitled him to marked respect; and he expressed his opinions with great force and clearness. He prescribed a course which he believed would effect the recovery of the patient, at the same time insisting upon entire abstinence from alcoholic stimulants.

Under the new treatment the invalid began slowly to improve. But with returning strength returned the cravings of appetite for accustomed indulgence. From day to day she

was disappointed at the non-appearance of favorite cordials which had before solaced the tedium of a sick-room. Her physician denied them to her. Her nurse could neither be persuaded nor bribed to procure them. Her husband anticipated every wish save this she dared not express to him.

When able to go below stairs, she found that her confidential servant had been dismissed. She did not need to ask why this was done. She was too proud to complain; and now, forced to reflect upon her past life, she secretly resolved to surprise her friends by becoming a rigid teetotaler. Other resolves, too, were made, all to be carried into effect without explanation.

Tessa Gavazzi was staying with Mrs. Hilton, and her first call was made upon this young lady, whom she met graciously and affectionately. She was never more agreeable, never more seemingly oblivious of herself. She was interested in all which concerned her nephew and his prospects. At the proper time she sent an elegant gift to the bride-elect, and by her presence countenanced the marriage she bitterly regretted.

"When all our friends are married and

settled to housekeeping, I intend to look around for some friendless girl needing such a home as I can give her," remarked Horace Hilton's mother as she talked with her daughter-in-law. "Horace has provided so generously for me that, with a little economy, I can provide for another; and, as I grow older, I shall like to feel that there is some one growing up in my house. I am used to making the most of things."

"And the best of things," was replied. "There are plenty of friendless girls needing homes. I have just heard, too, that there is to be another *new* home established."

"Who are to be the proprietors?"

"Clara Truman and Jefferson Moulton. You remember we were all interested in him at the time Mr. Hayes found him in such a deplorable condition."

"Yes, I do remember. It was Miss Truman who tempted him to break his pledge. I wonder that she dares to trust him. Perhaps I should under the same circumstances; but I should sooner trust one who had never fallen."

"So should I, mother. The shadow of a doubt or fear as to my husband's uprightness would give me such a sense of insecurity that I could never be happy."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST LESSON.

"MARY! Mary! Mary Lanman!" This name was shrieked in shrillest accents, then muttered hoarsely, and anon wailed forth like the cry of an infant. In spasms of pain, in starts of affright, and in the stupor induced by powerful opiates, the call was ever the same.

Windows were tightly closed and doors carefully guarded, lest the call should be heard without, and the secret of the sick-room revealed. "An aggravated case of brain fever," said the physician when asked in regard to the disease which had prostrated Mrs. Ermengarde Warland; but he knew, and all her family knew, that she was the victim of *mania à potu*.

It is a common malady, more common than is often suspected; yet in the most luxuriously-furnished apartments, as well as in

noisome cellars, it is to be dreaded and concealed. Its terrors, its tortures, its attendant spirits of evil, and its fearful forebodings are everywhere counted a shame and disgrace.

Several previous attacks had so weakened the sufferer that, at her advanced age, it seemed impossible for her again to rally. It was believed that death would soon come to her relief. But still she lived, calling at intervals for Mary Lanman, and refusing to accept any explanation for the absence of this friend.

As a last resort, Mr. John Warland went himself for Mrs. Bennett, who, despite the infirmities which had greatly increased since she made the journey five years before, was induced to return with him. Not until she reached the house was she told the true condition of her former mistress.

"Mrs. Ermengarde a drunkard!" she then exclaimed in her astonishment.

"But one of our family has ever deserved that epithet," was the haughty reply. "We hold ourselves above such vulgarity."

"Call it by what name you please, John Warland. I am an old woman, and I have no quarrel with you. But you may as well hear

the truth. The Warlands have been hard drinkers for five generations. Mrs. Ermengarde is not the first of her father's family who has fallen. Take warning in time, lest you, too, come down to your grave dishonored."

"Mrs. Bennett, you forget yourself. We are not used to dictation."

"With God there is no respect of persons," said the woman solemnly. "He will not ask *you* or any member of your family how much of punishment you will accept. In his own time and way it will be meted out, and you must submit. I have finished my sermon, and am ready to see Mrs. Ermengarde."

"Mary! Mary! Mary Lanman!"

"Yes, Mrs. Ermengarde. I am sorry I have kept you waiting so long."

"How could you, Mary, when I wanted you so much? Don't go away again. Sit down here where I can see you, and don't let—don't let—"

Here the voice died away in a whisper, as though the words uttered were too dreadful to be spoken aloud.

"I will take care of you," was replied. "You can close your eyes, and go to sleep. I

will sit beside you, and see that nothing hurts you."

"I knew you would, Mary, if you were only here. You were always a good girl. But you have been so long in coming. There! There! Don't you see?"

"Drive those creatures from the room," commanded Mrs. Bennett, and the attendant seemed to obey the command. Again and again was this scene enacted, until exhaustion was followed by profound sleep. Upon waking, and finding Mrs. Bennett beside her, the suffering woman begged for a glass of wine. So piteously did she plead that it was hard to refuse her; but the physician's orders were peremptory.

Another morning dawned, and now another cry was heard: "Hastings! Hastings!"

When told that Hastings was dead, Mrs. Ermengarde Warland insisted upon seeing his son. She would not be denied. She must see this boy, the only boy in the generation.

A telegram was despatched to the young man, and at the earliest hour possible he arrived at his uncle's house. He was not expected so soon; but he did not come before

his presence and services were required. For a moment his aunt seemed to recognize him. Then the demon's spell was again upon her.

It was terrible to witness her struggles, as she strove to escape from the horrors with which a disordered fancy surrounded her. More terrible, perhaps, than even this was the going out of her life in utter darkness. Yet all was but the penalty she had herself incurred, the retribution for a sin whose punishment cannot be evaded.

When there was no further need of concealment, there was much of pomp and display. There were sable trappings and stately ceremonies; lilies and immortelles. Fragrant flowers of creamy whiteness gave forth their perfume like incense; and the world looked on while the pageant was enacted.

Mrs. Bennett, longing for the rest and quiet of her own humble home, did not remain to witness it.

There was another who would gladly have absented himself, and to whom all this display seemed but empty mockery; the tinsel covering of some hidden horror. Had the young nephew needed the most impressive lesson it was possible to receive, except

through actual, personal experience, this need was now supplied. He loathed the very thought of wine. Henceforth it would be to him like some poisoned draught whose exhalations are a warning of its deadly power.

Upon reading the last will and testament of the deceased, it was found that after various bequests, in which all her immediate family were generously remembered, John Hastings Warland, as residuary legatee, was heir to all property not otherwise devised. A general astonishment followed this revelation; and no one was more astonished than he who had so constantly omitted the use of his middle name that few would recognize him as the person designated. He had not desired this fortune. He did not stay to ask its value.

Would it bring with it a curse?

His mother half feared it. His Grandfather Bedlow expressed his fears so soon as he knew what had transpired, adding, with an ominous shake of his head, "John is a Warland."

It must be, however, that the old man forgot his fears when a few months later John came to him, and, sitting down beside him, talked of the good which must be done with this money.

"If I had known five years ago that I should now have so much at my control, it might have ruined me," he said.

"No doubt it would, my boy," replied his grandfather. "It don't seem now as though it would. It don't seem so—not if you've told me the truth. Your father thinks it won't, and I allow him to be a judge. He's a bright man, as well as a good one."

"Yes, he is, grandfather. But I don't think anybody knows how *good* he is, except mother and me. I should love him for making mother so happy, if he did nothing for me. I wish I was his own son. I would gladly exchange my inheritance of money for the inheritance of a truly honorable name."

Of all his friends, Mrs. Archer was, perhaps, the only one who did not question whether this inheritance was really a blessing. She had changed much since the illness which had brought her so near to the grave; yet she still worshipped at the shrine of wealth and fashion. John Warland's deferential manners had won her favor long before she was willing to accord him more than the most distant recognition. Now she praised him as a "gen-

tleman, worthy of the position he was destined to occupy."

Raleigh Bedlow, noble fellow that he was, would not listen to a doubt of his Cousin John's integrity, although, in his secret heart, he wished that Mrs. Ermengarde Warland had bestowed her property elsewhere.

Time has proved that even the vague feeling which prompted this wish need not have been.

There is wealth without the curse of wine.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

National Temperance Society

AND PUBLICATION HOUSE.

THE NATIONAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, organized in 1866 for the purpose of supplying a sound and able Temperance literature, have already stereotyped and published *three hundred and fifty* publications of all sorts and sizes, from the one-page tract up to the bound volume of 500 pages. This list comprises books, tracts, and pamphlets, containing essays, stories, sermons, arguments, statistics, history, etc., upon every phase of the question. Special attention has been given to the department

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